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# AN INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

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HOLLY ESTIL CUNNINGHAM











# AN INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

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BY

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TO  
MY FIRST TEACHERS OF PHILOSOPHY  
THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED  
BY  
THEIR SON







## PREFACE

THE chief purposes of this work are (a) to present the student with a method of studying problems of the type of those discussed in philosophy especially and in the social sciences generally, and (b) to acquaint him with the fundamental movements and problems of philosophy. The immature student usually leaves his early courses with the feeling that he has gained little of value and that everything is "up in the air." He has come from the study of the exact sciences and mathematics, and to tackle the problems of philosophy directly when there is no method in sight for handling them creates the feeling that he is beating thin air. The experience of the average student is seldom such as to render him sympathetic with the great problems of philosophy—he is too full of the concrete affairs of the world to stop to theorize and speculate; and his past training in the exact sciences and mathematics renders him suspicious of any procedure that does not approximate the exactness that prevails in the world he knows. The problems themselves generally seem too far away and too indefinite. Consequently, both from the standpoint of method and problem, matters appear alien, and students are driven away from the further study of philosophy. Later in experience indefiniteness may be looked upon, and rightfully so possibly, as a thing to be desired.

With these two ideas uppermost, this text attempts to furnish a method, the genetico-inductive, not only in theory but in the actual handling of the subject matter of the book

itself; and to show that the problems of philosophy are not something far removed "from the crowd's ignoble strife," but that they grow out of the conditions of the actual life of the people. It is not at all claimed that these are new ideas, but it does seem that they have not been sufficiently emphasized in introductory courses, and, indeed, in the literature of certain "fixed" varieties of philosophy. If too much emphasis is placed on these ideas it is because of the lack of it in many other works.

It is also hoped that the linking up of philosophy with the affairs of life will aid in the direction of rendering it a more vital force in the affairs of this world—in the rendering of knowledge of philosophy power in man's world.

Acknowledgments are due to a large group of men whose lectures I have been fortunate enough to attend, to those patient students whose works I have frequently cited, and to my wife who has helped at every turn in the preparation of the manuscript.

HOLLY ESTIL CUNNINGHAM.

The University of Oklahoma,

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# INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

## CHAPTER I

### METHOD OF TREATMENT

1. **Introductory.**—Every undertaking must follow some plan or method if it would be fruitful in results. The data which any science takes as its own must be handled in accordance with some well-conceived plan in order that any one who would follow the science might become possessed of the point of view of the author of it. In fact, the method which is employed is of the greatest importance in determining the value of any intellectual pursuit. If one were asked to indicate in what field intellectual efforts have made the most advance in recent years, one would not be far wrong in asserting that the most far-reaching and influential steps had been taken in the realm of scientific method, or the method of procedure. We may cite as examples the radical changes connected with the methods of present day economists in contrast with the earlier thinker in this field who worked on a few so-called axiomatic principles from which he deduced his system; or the psychologist who formerly employed the “arm chair” method on the workings of his own consciousness, in contrast with the modern man of this science whose laboratory rivals in completeness that of the physicist or chemist. The method of deduction, so fruitful



in many ways, has, until recently, been the method *par excellence* of science. It was thought that this method was the method of mathematics, and that, since mathematics is peculiarly certain and exact, the other sciences, in order to possess these same attributes, must also follow this method.

In the physical sciences, especially, the experimental method has won the day. Briefly, this method can be described as working under controlled conditions. With the historical and social sciences the case is somewhat different—the conditions can not well be controlled. This does not mean that no control whatever can be exercised, for if this were the case no movements of reform could be possible; but it does mean that in the latter the control is more difficult to secure. We may say that the method to be pursued in dealing with social, political, economic, religious, and philosophical problems is the *genetic* method. It may be described as the treatment of problems from the standpoint of their origin and development, from the point of view of their genesis and history. This method which is not new, but which has not been applied consistently to all the problems of interest, has certain advantages which will now be pointed out.

**2. Advantages of the Genetic Method.**—Of the two methods of reasoning usually employed, the deductive and the inductive, the genetic method is more in harmony with the spirit of the latter. It has no general principles to reason from but it assists in the formulation of principles so that the deductive method may then be employed as a test of the genuineness of the principles reached genetically, historically, experimentally, and inductively.

(a) *It gives simpler material to work with.* When we look about us to-day, we find that our methods of action are so complex that we are likely to become confused and lose

our way. Our political life calls here, our economic there, our religious yonder. On every side we find conflicting claims which demand attention.

In the last few decades we have so changed our methods of living that it is almost impossible to get outside of the demands of the present to investigate the principle which runs through all our actions. We have become so specialized that it is with great difficulty that we can see the claims of our opponents. It is within the last century that most of the great inventions which have changed our methods of getting a living have been made. Each one of us is able no longer to carry on all the activities necessary to the demands of modern life, and the result is that each must do some one thing well and leave the rest to some one else. A scholar now is one who has become a specialist in some one line of interest. He is not the man he once was, namely, one who knew everything. We sometimes wonder how it could be possible for a man to be so learned as were some of the ancients, but we must remember that there was not so much to be known in those days. A man might know all about physics, chemistry, medicine, astronomy, and mathematics, but there was not so much to be known about each of these in the earlier days. For example, when the treatment of diseases centered about bleeding the patient and giving him much hot water to drink, one soon could become a physician. Consequently, if we begin genetically we shall find our material greatly simplified. We shall see the same principle at work throughout, but it will be more easily witnessed when the details are not so numerous.

(b) The genetic method illustrates a great principle for the interpretation of intellectual activity, namely, *that theories are the child of the age in which they have flourished*. It is often thought that certain theories are true

universally, *i.e.*, regardless of time, place, or circumstance; but the genetic method shows us that theories, principles, truths, axioms, et cetera, are merely *methods* of meeting certain problems which arose in the experience of the people who projected the theory or principle. This principle that theories, truths, and axioms are the child of the age in which they have flourished will be employed by us in our discussions of the various philosophical systems which we shall consider farther on. We find it difficult on any other principle to account for various practices which we know to occur in primitive society. It also assists us in interpreting customs of ancient peoples, which to us appear even immoral. Such theories, for example, as "natural rights" the "Ptolemaic astronomy," the "contract" theory of the state, the "divine right of kings" have been fruitful and indeed have met the conditions against which they were set; but they have served their day and possess for us an historical interest only.

(c) The genetic method makes possible *a statement of the principle of progress*. It is by a treatment of matters in their historical development that we discover the conditions that make the development possible. Should we take things as they are with us to-day we should experience great difficulty in making evident the principles which are implicit in the chaos of life; we should have no means of discovering the method by which progress is made for we should know none of the difficulties against which past theories and principles have been set. The genetic method, however, renders less difficult the task of accounting for progress by showing just what factors were present in the experience of any period which made necessary a reconstruction of the theories of that period. The method makes it possible to indicate the relation between the physical environment and the thought of the period; the influence of wars; the significance



of the mingling of different races; the influence of newer methods of securing food and clothing; and, in short, it provides for the introduction of all matters which are influential in shaping the intellectual attitudes of a people. From an examination of these facts we discover a principle which is valuable as a means of reform, a principle which makes it possible to predict with reasonable accuracy the possible outcome of any given set of conditions. From the standpoint of reform, we observe that this can occur only when the proper conditions underlying it are present. It makes evident the fact that great reforms can not occur in a night, that revolutions are the result of a continuous growth along social, political, economic, religious, and intellectual lines, and are not, as is sometimes thought by the demagogue, and even by the "social reformer," the result of sudden and sporadic outbreak along some particular line of interest.

(d) The genetic method *acquaints us with survivals*. Should we begin our investigation of problems such as are present with us to-day, we should shut ourselves out from one of the fruitful means of interpretation of facts. Facts as they exist with us have a history; they did not spring full grown from the head of Zeus, but each one is steeped in the dew of the past. Facts are neither true nor false—they just *are*; and since this is the case we should have no means of evaluating them unless we had recourse to a method which gives light on how the facts came to be as they are and what they are. A vestigial fact might, to all intents and purposes, masquerade as a valid, valuable, or genuine fact unless we possess means of knowing that it is indeed a survival. The human body possesses a great number of organs which, as far as we can determine, have ceased to function in the vital processes of the organism. These are vestigial

organs which have served their purposes in the economy of the organism in some remote past, but which are now of no discernible value in the processes which are essential to the welfare of the individual. Just so it is with certain facts—some are survivals, and we have no other method of knowing this than by a study of how things came to be what they are. When we once know that a custom is a survival, be it a matter of morality or of science or of philosophy or what not, we are able to behave intelligently in the presence of the fact; we are able to *evaluate* it; and the business of evaluating facts is the highest achievement of the species; it is this which differentiates man from the other animals. The results of more elaborate intellectual efforts, such as theories, hypotheses, standpoints, methods of interpretation, are also matters of history. These frequently survive in an age which is unsuited for them just as clothing in certain sections is out of style. The change from the old to the new has not been so radical but that the older theory answers certain demands and for this reason it remains over beyond its full usefulness and in general serves as a check to further progress.

The genetic method is valuable just here in that it makes known those survivals in fact and in theory. It assists us in giving due consideration to, and full appreciation of, the merits of the system in question.

It makes us tolerant; we are less prone to throw aside a method of thought as useless or worthless, less likely to dismiss a system of morality as foolish or absurd, less likely to dismiss a religious system as false, if we know the conditions and circumstances surrounding its origin and development. When we know these conditions it is probable that we shall feel that the system of religion, or of morality, or of philosophy which was born of them is the only system in the

presence of the circumstances which would do justice to them; or at least we shall see that the system is plausible and is consistent with the circumstances which it attempted to meet.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF PHILOSOPHY

1. **The Meaning and Place of Psychology.**—When we speak of psychology as a background of philosophy we do not mean to employ the term as it is ordinarily used in the text books on that subject. Psychologists generally are dealing with the *individual* consciousness and this is the psychologist's own. The traditional method of that science is introspection, and this tends to narrow the view of the scope of psychology. This method is least effective in a realm of behavior which is of greatest importance for the understanding of many of the problems of politics, economics, sociology, religion, and philosophy. That realm is our emotional and instinctive behavior. Introspection yields results in the field of the cognitive processes which are especially amenable to description, analysis, and classification, but man is more than a thinking being; he is a feeling being as well. Man thinks only when he must do so. If he is able to meet the demands of the situation on any other level of conduct than the cognitive, thinking will not take place.

Writers on the various philosophical disciplines have generally recognized the value of psychology as a foundation for their efforts, but, because of a narrow conception of the scope of psychology, they have been compelled to assume a set of psychological principles, and from these they deduce their system. For example, the older political economy worked on the false assumption that man is a "reasonable



being" who always seeks his own good. From this assumption was deduced the principle that free competition in the open world markets would secure goods at the lowest possible cost. But such theorists failed to take into account another aspect of man's make-up, namely, the feeling or emotional side. They overlooked the fact that man is moved to act on other levels and bases than the intellectual; that he is open to suggestion, a fact which is daily demonstrated in the principles of advertising.

Psychology, as we mean to use it in this connection, does not deal with a strictly individual human mind, for such mind is an abstraction and has no significance for our purposes. But in keeping with our statements in the first chapter, the mind itself is a product of the ages. It is the result of the play of innumerable social and environmental factors. In this sense we may speak of mind as social consciousness and of the self as a social self. The mind, as we shall view it, is possessed of certain tendencies to action, which determine the more elaborate and complex forms of behavior. These tendencies we call the instincts which are the fountains from which more elaborate types of action flow. It is to be understood that the instincts themselves have a history, and are not ultimate "givens" in the sense that they were planted in man once for all at some early period of his existence. They may be described as race habits, methods of meeting certain crises in the battle that man had to wage against the competitors in the world, and against the world itself.

**2. The Origin of the Instincts.**—As to the origin of the instincts we have not time to inquire at any length, though several theories have been advanced. One is the theory of *lapsed intelligence* which briefly is that consciousness was present at the beginning of organic life and that the first

movements of the organism were conscious; but when the movements became fixed, consciousness lapsed and the forms of behavior were inherited by later generations. Another theory is that of Herbert Spencer, who holds that consciousness appeared after actions at some moment of stress in the nervous system. For our purposes we may say that instincts represent variations which have proved successful in meeting the demands which nature made for survival. These variations have been handed down along with many others such as eyes, ears, and hands, and all represent means of meeting the demands of the environment. All the instincts are not of equal strength, and they vary even in different individuals; but the higher types of behavior such as our most recondite intellectual efforts are founded ultimately on these simple modes of action.

**3. Classification of the Instincts.**—The student who has given some attention to the study of instincts as they are treated by various psychologists will have noticed that the list varies from author to author. This is sometimes due to the different points of view from which the subject is attacked, and sometimes from the purposes of the author. We shall group the instincts under two great headings, namely, those that have to do with the getting of food, and those that have to deal with the reproduction of the species. Certain of the instincts might profitably be considered under either heading, for example, the instinct of pugnacity. The instinct to fight is aroused when another of the species attempts to block the satisfaction of hunger which is connected with the food processes, or the same tendency may be stimulated when another encroaches upon the sex interests of any member of the species. The instinct of curiosity also may be considered as falling under both headings. The headings themselves are selected as comprehending all the instincts

for at least two reasons: (a) food and sex are two elemental necessities for any survival whatever; (b) in the concrete experiences of primitive tribes and from our knowledge of early man, and from the study of survivals in the various aspects of experience, such as in religion, art, literature, and science, we find the activities of life, the ceremonials, the myths, magic, *et cetera*, centering around these two prime necessities. The second of these reasons will be elaborated as we proceed, but we shall offer no arguments for or against the first one further than to say that in the absence of these two necessities there would be no occasion for the study of philosophy or of anything else.

**4. The Principal Instincts of Man.**—We have now to enumerate the chief instincts of man and to show how they function in his social and physical environment. It is understood that the instincts discussed in this connection fall under the two general headings mentioned above, some under one, some probably under both.

It is highly probable that all the instincts are derived from the two primary needs, and that in the last analysis these two springs are the feeders of all our elaborate and complex modes of action, that they are the motors which keep the organism at work. But we shall speak of instincts more in keeping with present psychological usage rather than to enter into controversies over the matter.

(a) Of the general instinct of the reproduction of the species we may note the following divisions:

(1) *The Parental Instinct.*—This is sometimes called the *maternal* instinct because it is more pronounced in the female of the species. It is the instinct which drives the mother to protect and care for her young and is common not only in the human family but in the lower animal world as well. It is one of the most powerful of the in-



instincts as one can readily see, who has beheld the mother in the presence of danger sacrifice herself for her young. Even among the apes the mother carries her young for many months, seldom permitting a separation even for a short time. Often the emotional aspects of the instinct are extended through association to the objects which are intimately associated with the child. Clothes and toys elicit the same type of response that the original object, the child, did. This transfer to other objects is highly important and will be considered in due time. Here we may say that extension of the emotional life to other objects is at the bottom of what we know as moral indignation which is the root of public law.

(2) *The Instinct of Self-display*.—This instinct is peculiarly connected with sex life, not only in man, but in the lower animals. It is primarily social in its nature, as indeed are all instincts connected with sex. Among the lower animals the instinct is best in evidence during the mating season. Among young children it is noticed in such expressions as, "See what I can do," when some display of physical ability is made. In the period of adolescence it takes the form of elaborate dress, vanity in girls, peculiarities in speech, bravado in boys, and numerous other interesting variations which every one knows.

On the other hand we have the instinct of subjection, the correlate of display, which is present also in the lower forms of organism. The little dog crawls in the presence of the big one as though apologizing for being alive; the young child expresses itself along these lines in the side glances it casts at visitors and strangers; the adolescent, in the presence of parents and older people; and primitive and even civilized people, in the presence of superiors. We shall later see the connection of this instinct with religion and social life.



(3) *The Pugnacious Instinct*.—This is not only connected with sex, but is also related to the food getting processes. The stimulus which calls it into play is the thwarting or obstructing of the free activity which is called out by any other instinct. In the animal world the greatest excitement is provoked when the sex impulse is thwarted, and it is a matter of common observation that it is stimulated when food is taken from a hungry animal. These elemental tendencies to attack an opponent when another tendency to act is thwarted become highly elaborated in more advanced social and economic life, but the root of all these elaborations is to be found in this primordial disposition.

It has been pointed out that peoples of regions in which the food supply is abundant possess a weakened pugnacious instinct.

(b) The instincts which group themselves about the food getting process and which are probably derived from this prime necessity will be enumerated at this point, and will be further considered in another connection.

(1) *The Gregarious Instinct*. This, as is practically the case with all the other instincts, is found in the life and activities of the lower animals. The instinct is probably derived from the necessity of coöperation in securing an ample food supply. It is certain that this instinct is of first importance in the building of social institutions, and is fundamental in family life. Anthropologists disagree as to the particular form primitive human society took, whether horde or group of blood relatives, but they agree as to the social or gregarious nature of man. It is this indigenous tendency which is at the bottom of the growth of cities and the problems that grow out of them. We can readily see how those animals which by chance roamed in groups were able to survive against their less fortunate competitors who struggled singly. The latter perished while the former passed on their

tendency to the future generations. After a long time the tendency became a race habit, an instinct, which, in many cases, would actually work to the disadvantage of the species, for many more might congregate in one place than could be supplied with food.

(2) *The Instinct of Acquisition* grows out of the food getting process. Those species which developed these tendencies survived while others perished in the struggle for existence. The instinct is expressed in children who collect and guard carefully all sorts of odds and ends. In exaggerated or perverted form it is seen in men who collect great fortunes far beyond their food or shelter needs.

(3) *The Instinct of Construction* is developed from the primal necessity, food. Man's first tools were constructed in response to the food need; his snares, his bows and arrows, his spears and lances, are expressions of the need to eat. His implements of warfare are for the supreme purpose of depriving an enemy tribe of its means of living and of its women. It was Aristotle who said that man is a social animal, but, it well may be added, man is a *constructive* animal. A glance at the large vessels, railroads, et cetera, of modern civilization will convince one that the constructive instinct is all-powerful in the development of society. While in many ways the primitive desire for food seems lost in the maze of details, a little thought will reveal that after all these wonderful elaborations are for the purposes of rendering less difficult the gratification of the hunger demands.

(4) *The Instinct of Curiosity* is the tendency to approach and examine an object which excites the organism. The unfamiliar, the non-habitual, is usually the stimulus. It is of importance in such activities as the trying out of new foods, new methods of capture, new plans of meeting problems, and, finally, is a driving force in all our intellec-

tual achievements. It is the radex of science. Of course it is quite difficult to connect the efforts of science in every case with the prime needs of life, but, as James says, all theories must sooner or later "cash in" in terms of the practical needs of life.

There are many other innate tendencies to action which we shall not discuss here but which may be employed as occasion demands as we advance. Such, for example, are fear, play, imitation, jealousy, et cetera. All these, however, are modes of the great necessities for survival. For example, the most generally accepted theory of play, that of Groos, is that it is a preparation for the more strenuous duties and activities of life. Tarde and Baldwin have seen fit to make imitation the chief instinct, and to group all activity about it. Jealousy is primarily connected with sex and illustrates the power of one of our primal needs, reproduction of the species.

### **5. How the Instincts Function in Man's Environment.—**

Thus far we have spoken of the instincts as if they occur in their pure, unmixed form. Such, however, is rarely the case. An analogous case is seen in the psychological treatment of the phenomena of sensation. There, it will be remembered, the qualities of sensation are considered, the end organs which receive the stimulus, the attributes of the elemental fact of consciousness, and many other details regarded as necessary to a complete understanding of the subject are diligently presented. After all this has been done the student is informed of the fact that there are no such things as pure sensations, but they are supposed elements out of which higher individual conscious processes are made, and that they are means for the interpretation of the facts of cognitive consciousness. We may say that sensations occupy somewhat the same place in the cognitive processes that the



instincts do in the higher mental and social life of the species. As we never experience a pure sensation, a pure quality, but always a quality belonging to something; so it is that we seldom if ever witness the operation of a pure instinct or experience a pure emotion, the latter being the conscious concomitant of the former, especially when the instinct fails in its functioning. Our instinctive and emotional life become organized about objects in the same manner in which sensations become organized into objects in perception. For example, the tender emotion so noticeable in the attitude of the mother towards her child does not exist at large, but it is organized with other emotions about an object, namely, the child. Neither does jealousy exist on "general principles," but it always has reference to an object, usually a member of the opposite sex. In the absence of objects about which our life is organized, we should behave in a chaotic, irregular, and wholly irresponsible manner. Following Shand and others we may call this organization of our mental and social life about things, the *sentiments*, in the absence of which our emotional life would lack consistency, coherence and order; and our conduct which is based on these springs of action, would be correspondingly chaotic and disorderly.

Man lives and moves and has his being in a world of objects, and these objects are not merely "given," not just there to be reacted to, not "neutral" things; but they are built up, developed in the course of experience. *Objects, in other words, have a history.* Emotionalized objects, that is, evaluated objects or those towards which an attitude is taken, are of two general kinds: first, those of approval; second, those of disapproval. We speak of approval and disapproval in the widest sense of these terms as signifying a "yes" or "no" attitude, "for" or "against,"



“satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory,” as meeting the needs of the organism or failing to do so. It is out of approval and disapproval in this wider sense that right and wrong, truth and falsehood, beautiful and ugly, good and evil, arise. These are much more elaborate and demand a much higher grade of intelligence than elemental approval and disapproval which are almost instinctive; and it is the task of a thoroughgoing genetic psycho-philosophy to show the stages of growth in attitudes about objects from the most elemental to the complex forms which make up the subject matter of logic, ethics, æsthetics, law, government, science and religion.

In another connection we have shown the influence of certain types of agencies in the building of more complex modes of action, in the building of valuable objects and institutions. Here we mention war as a means of rendering valuable certain objects, of making sharper certain ideals, of defining more precisely certain aims and purposes, of rendering loosely organized groups into stable and permanent forms of organization, of developing group solidarity, and, finally, of building up that sentiment about a territorial expanse and the institutions which it supports which makes it possible for men to give their lives for its defense and maintenance. We see also grouped about the child a set of actions which we denominate acts of self-sacrifice. To form an estimate of the value of the sentiments about the child we have but to look at the many regulations of society, not only in civilized groups, but in savage as well, for its protection and for the care in providing that the race shall be continued. To insure a continuance of the race the institution of marriage has prevailed in all times and among practically all peoples.

This institution has been guarded by the most solemn

social sanctions as is witnessed by the fact that marriages have usually been associated with religious activities. Ceremonials of marriage in our own society are usually performed by the representatives of religion, but with the growth of political power and with the breakdown of the supremacy of the church, the civil authorities sometimes perform the rites; but the point is true, nevertheless, that the strongest social, legal, and religious sanctions support the institution of marriage.

**6. Elaborations of the Instincts in the Life of Society.—**

We have to consider some of the workings of the instincts in society, or how they become centered and grouped about objects, or, stated otherwise, how objects become valuable or what they are.

(a) In addition to what has been said about the sex instinct and its elaborations, we must add that it not only is the foundation of family life, but it also figures in all humanitarian movements and is the source of moral indignation. We have but to think of the love of the mother for her child as transferred to other objects, first, possibly to those that are intimately associated with the child, such as its toys, then to other children and to other people, and at a still later period to abstract ideals, such as justice for all mankind, to gain an idea of the numerous movements that take their origin in this instinctive tendency. Poor laws, hospitals, better working conditions, the abolition of slavery, child labor laws, are some of the results which follow in part from the mother instinct.

(b) *Self-Display and Self-Subjection in Social Life.* What a group does and how it is organized for doing it are always reflected in their speculative life, be that religious, scientific, or philosophical. This is fundamental for understanding the relation between the instincts and the complex

behavior founded on them. Self display, for example, may lead to any exaggeration of certain valuable objects. These over-evaluated objects dominate the thinking of the individual or the group which owns them. This means that "the world is jaundiced to the jaundiced eye," so that all speculative efforts of such an individual or group are always clouded by the ruling interest.

Self-display is social, that is, it is *for another*, and the other is usually one of the opposite sex. It becomes more elaborate in the course of time, so that cities, states, and nations manifest it. It is chiefly in this more elaborate form that it affects the behavior of the individual for he *thinks* and *acts* in terms of the social life about him. Institutions are thus created, ideals are established, and organizations effected which embody the instincts of display, and which, when established, form a portion of the social environment which is man's medium of speculation.

Subjection, the counterpart of self-display, functions in situations in which man feels that he has exhausted his resources in coping with the difficulties which present themselves to him. One in the presence of the chief must humble himself as does the little dog in the presence of the big one. Subjection thus becomes one of the chief sources of classes, castes, orders, which in turn become reflected in speculative efforts. Social classes, for example, are projected into the life and activities of the gods so that a chief god surrounded by subordinates forms the ideal of the spirit world.

The similarity between the social organization that prevailed in the middle ages in which every one "belonged" to some one else and the organization of the church in the same period has often been pointed out. Some of the most difficult questions of the early church fathers were centered about the relations that should obtain between the Father



and the Son, that is, the co-ordination and subordination of power and function, just as the great governmental problems have hinged on the relation between the various departments of the government, and the relations between the state and the people, or the rulers and the subjects.

(c) *The Instinct of Pugnacity in Social Life.* As was indicated a few pages back, this instinct is not generally expressed in the same manner as in primitive times. The bodily combat has given place to other forms as laws and customs have developed, but at times the primæval tendency gains the ascendancy and the whole world organizes on the principle of the "claw and fang." The whole history of the race has time and again been written as a series of wars in which it is often difficult to show just what was gained by either side. If we ask as did little Peterkin, "Now tell us all about the war, and what they killed each other for," we often get no other answer than, "But 'twas a famous victory." As good an answer as we can find generally is that wars are due to the pugnacious instinct of some ruler plus the desire for power and self-display.

The social effects of the instinct of pugnacity are marked. Among those races in which the pugnacious instinct is deficient we find a patient people who do not have a taste for war and who despise the military virtues. The lack of progress on the part of China, for example, is due largely to a defective pugnacious instinct, but among those peoples in whom the spirit of the warrior is strong we note the greatest progress along all lines. In societies formed by those peoples who are deficient in the pugnacious instinct there is little group solidarity. Among them, also, a religion of peace and quietness finds a congenial home. Buddhism flourishes among them "in spirit and in truth"; while among the more pugnacious peoples the religion of Chris-



tianity is accepted in theory only. A rather sharp distinction is, accordingly, drawn between the "religious" and the "moral," and between "religion" and "business." One of the greatest problems that Christianity has had to face is that in connection with the pugnacious instinct. In mediæval times the monk went his way unarmed, dressed in the robes of his calling, while on the other hand the armored knight representing the calling of war "chased his favorite phantom." Christianity teaches us to turn the left cheek if the right is struck, but the instinct of pugnacity dictates another *modus operandi*. The problem of harmonizing these two diverse methods of action is one of the great problems that confronts our religion.

Collective pugnacity operates in what we know as moral indignation. The community is "outraged" by certain acts of violence, and our courts of law are the means by which we inflict punishment on the offender. The state is the plaintiff in crimes against its "peace and dignity," and while punishment is theoretically for the purpose of reformation, it still partakes of primitive retribution. "The administration of criminal law is the organized and regulated expression of the anger of society, modified and softened in various degrees by the desire that punishment may reform the wrong-doer and deter others from similar actions."

Among peoples who possess a highly developed pugnacious instinct we find the greatest progress in the arts, sciences, social and political organization, commerce and industry. The instinct takes the milder form of rivalry which is the motive force of the great portion of the serious labors of mankind. We strive to excel those in the same line of occupation as ourselves, and he who employs a "pacesetter" is working unconsciously perhaps on a race-long tendency of human nature. Every teacher knows the ad-

vantages to the class of having one or two bright students who set the pace for the rest. The great men of science such as Newton and Galileo, the leaders of literature, the geniuses of philosophy, the masters of art and music, are the pace setters of the race, and the social importance of these leaders can not be over-estimated. Competition, the fundamental premise of the older economy, is based upon the pugnacious instinct. "Competition is the life of trade"—this we hear again and again. It is one of the modified forms of "getting even," which is displayed all the way from the corner grocery to international trade. "Blood revenge" is now expressed in competition, skilful advertising, in the duties of the "traveling man," and in the dozens of activities connected with the movements of business. The old expression, "Everything is fair in love and war," is the common man's generalization of two great tendencies essential to the survival of the race. It represents the "chimney corner" philosophy of those who dimly perceive the motive force of these tendencies and their importance in the higher and more elaborately organized types of reaction in the presence of stimuli.

(d) *The Gregarious Instinct.* We have spoken of the gregarious instinct as probably derived from mutual aid in the quest for food and defense against the attack of enemies. We now want to indicate the operation of this instinct in the life of society. The rapid growth of cities in the last one hundred years is not wholly due to economic factors, as has been urged by some, because in countries which are highly favorable to agricultural and pastoral life the tendency to congregate in cities is in evidence. China presents one of the best examples of the gregarious instinct as operating rather than economic factors. Likewise half the population of Australia is found in towns and cities

along the coast, although the country is primarily an agricultural and pastoral one. The problems which arise as a result of urban life are too well known to need mention. The race has always until recently lived in close connection with the soil, and we have not as yet fully reflected our newer methods of living into a conscious philosophy. In primitive societies we find those in the same group who are of blood kin, of the same totem, tribe, or clan, occupying a definite territory. The idea of class, clan, or kin is reflected in modern society in certain class distinctions, as the capitalist and the labor classes, the professions and the vocations, et cetera. That is to say, after the gregarious instinct has brought together any number of individuals, they tend to divide into classes of more or less "like-minded" individuals—a fact which accounts for various "quarters" in the large cities, for religious sects, lodges, and to some extent, political parties.

(e) *The Acquisitive Instinct*, derived, as was suggested from the food-getting activities, occupies a prominent place in the elaborations of industry. Manufacture and foreign trade grow up and with them the problems of labor and capital, employer and employee, freedom of the seas, and the numerous questions relating to property. A great bulk of the laws of a state refers to the rights of property, more, indeed, than to the person. Possibly one of the greatest problems growing out of the instinct of acquisition, reinforced by the gregarious instinct, is that created by the introduction of the factory system which led to the massing of large numbers of people in the towns and cities. Redistribution of population takes place, the city becomes the center of advancement and the generator of social and political ideals; the country, because of lack of intercourse, becomes backward and often reactionary. The town of the



middle ages helped as much as any other factor in the breakdown of feudal society. Outside the towns the industrial classes were servile and a stigma attached to labor; but inside the towns labor was honored due to the fluid intercourse between the inhabitants. Town life developed a mentality of its own far more plastic than that which prevailed in the country. Races inter-married, the mind became alert, kin and class ties were broken, and the group was established on a different foundation. In fact it was in this type of activity that the individual was born, for, becoming wealthy he no longer needed the continual support of the unseen powers and the support of his immediate group, but relied on his own skill and foresight.

The division of labor brought about as a result of a large number of people in the same place is reflected in their moral life in a sharp division between the secular and the religious, between morality and religion, and finally, between morality and business. It tends to develop a different type of categories of value, a newer kind of virtues, and a different method of interpreting the facts of experience because the facts themselves have changed.

“There is, furthermore, reason to believe that the formation of large, dense, complex bodies of population is favorable to the growth of a belief in the rights of man as man and to the spread of ideas of human equality, that is, of habits of thought that underlie individualism and democracy.” The enlarged consumption of goods resulting from mass brings about social changes. Crimes against property decrease and vice increases; ethics becomes an ethics of temperance; religion forsakes the view of human depravity and ideas of human punishment die out; the god of fear becomes the god of love, and praise gains at the expense of prayer; the wealthy tend to segregate into a distinct social



class which converts portions of its means into political power, privileges, and exemptions; and an aristocracy results apart from royal grace or from the grace of God.

Such an aristocracy based on wealth is of great significance from a political point of view. It overthrows the primitive equality of citizens based upon their equal ability to bear arms in defense of their ideals, or for the winning of territory or other advantages, rendering the poor members of society clients and retainers of the rich; it is the first step in the development of knighthood, for the ability to own a horse and to fight on horseback rather than on foot has been the foundation of knighthood the world over. "Out of it grew the Greek *hippeis*, the Roman Equestrian Order, the Gaulish *equites*, and the mediæval knighthood."

The wealthy class can, accordingly, devote themselves to war and politics while the poor labor with their hands. Such facts account for the political philosophy which prevails in monarchies, aristocracies, and oligarchies. The masters themselves being the only class which possesses the necessary leisure for reflective thinking, since the poor are kept close to the activities essential to bare existence, project their own interests, aims, and purposes into an ideal state, and enthusiastically set as a goal the realization of their own purposes.

Many other results flow from the gratification of the instinct of acquisition, but we can not consider them all here. One is the idea that labor is not respectable. Since wealth carries with it freedom from toil, it soon becomes an apparent badge of wealth to get on without the performance of any labor. Carried to extremes, the wealthy class becomes the leisure class, and still farther, the idle rich class whose only benefit to the group, if it may be at all called a benefit, is to furnish employment to certain persons for personal

services. By imitation the less wealthy follow the more wealthy all down the graded line, with results that may be disastrous since the virtues of thrift, economy, and productive labor are forgotten or thrown aside. A second result is that the gratification of the acquisitive instinct may take precedence over all other activities, so that human values are measured in terms of property. A striking example of this appeared in Roman society during the closing years of the republic. Mommsen says in this connection: "To be poor was not merely the sorest disgrace and the worst crime, but the only disgrace and the only crime; for money the statesmen sold the state and the burgess sold his freedom; the post of the officer and the vote of the jurymen were to be had for the money; for money the lady of quality surrendered her person as well as the common courtesan; the falsifying of documents and perjuries had become so common that in a popular poet of this age, an oath is called "the plaster of debts." Men had forgotten what honesty was; a person who refused a bribe was regarded not as an upright man, but as a personal foe."<sup>1</sup>

Many of the greatest crises of history have centered about the instinct of acquisition. So great and so numerous have been the periods of destruction and construction grouped about the instinct of acquisition that many consider it the chief instinct in man, and accordingly have written histories and philosophies of history purely from the economic standpoint. The food getting activities undoubtedly have shaped a vast portion of man's energies, but we must guard against taking too narrow a view of the causes of social progress and of the woes of mankind. We have had occasion to see that there are other springs of

<sup>1</sup> Mommsen, *History of Rome*, Vol. II, p. 616.

human action, chiefly those based on the reproduction of the race, and which furnish the elements which enter into the more elaborate altruistic interests of man. These will be given more attention when we discuss the social background of philosophy. Here we merely indicate some historical results of acquisition, and leave the reader who is interested to pursue the references at the end of this chapter.

The downfall of Greek aristocracy was due in the main to the large fortunes made in commerce, industry, and navigation. The old aristocracy, busied with war and government, left the lands to the poorer classes who finally became wealthy through thrift and good management, and consequently demanded representation in the government. The result was at last, democracy. This triumph of property over birth does away with one form of monopoly but inaugurates another which in time becomes as great a menace to social welfare and progress as the one which was supplanted. Gracchus broke down the senatorial aristocracy of Rome by granting the merchants and industrial leaders certain privileges of an agricultural nature in Asia, and by giving them control over the jury courts. The towns of the middle ages bought their freedom from the feudal lords, and thus was entered the wedge which was mighty in breaking asunder the social organization of the period. Especially significant for us is the fact that democracy, freedom, equal opportunities—in short, the ideals of our own country are closely associated with equal opportunities to accumulate wealth due to the fact that there exist in our country large tracts of public lands.

**7. Reasons for a Consideration of the Psychological Background.**—We have considered some of the principal instincts in man, and the question might arise as to the sig-



nificance of the discussion. We take the opportunity in concluding to suggest what was intimated in the beginning that the psychological background is essential because,

(a) It shows what are the springs, the sources of our action.

(b) It makes clear the point that these springs of action determine within what limits our philosophical, scientific, social, and political problems must move.

(c) It shows that all knowledge, even philosophical, is for action.

Philosophy is one type of action, one method of meeting problems, one way of responding to stimuli. The springs of all action, philosophical as well as so-called practical, are the instincts. Since they are the sources, they set the kind of problems we shall meet—we know, that is, that our problems will fall under the great categories of food getting and reproduction of the species. *Just what particular turn* the statement of the problem and its answer will take we can not determine in advance. There are many factors which direct an instinct now in this direction for its satisfaction, now in another, and it is our purpose to examine some of the factors in greater detail.

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## CHAPTER III

### THE PHYSICAL BACKGROUND OF PHILOSOPHY

1. **Introductory.**—We have said that the instincts are built up about objects, that there are no *pure* emotions, and that man lives and operates in this world of objects thus built up. Instincts and objects are in fact but phases or modes of the same continuous process which we may call experience. We do not first possess instincts and later objects for them to act upon, but to act at all involves both instincts and objects, that is, *to act* as we mean to employ the term in human behavior. To make clearer what is meant here let us take an example or two. It is thought by many that we at first have consciousness and then objects, and by others that we first have objects and then consciousness; but as a matter of fact we do not *first* have either objects or consciousness, but the two are aspects in the one continuous act which we may call experience. Again, in the realm of ethics, it has been urged that an act is good if the *intention* is good. On the other hand it has been maintained that an act is good if the *consequences* are good. An act, however, can not be divided into these two aspects, motive and result, except for the purposes of discussion; but both go into any act which may be spoken of as moral. A failure to take note of the *continuity* of things and processes and their *interdependence* has led to much discussion and confusion among philosophers. In general, the doctrine of idealism has grown out of the conviction that consciousness ap-



pears first and is primary, while the most recent addition to the philosophical household, the new realism is based on the assumption of the priority of things. We come to believe that because *for the purposes of discussion* an act must be broken up and its elements or aspects considered *separately* the act itself is one element *plus* another, et cetera. Let us cite an example. In the text books on psychology there is a chapter on memory, one on perception, one on imagination, and one on each of the so-called cognitive processes. All these chapters bear on the general topic, the knowing process. These processes are not separate activities which are carried on, one for a little time and another for another, *but all may be present all the time*. In the same way we have become accustomed to speak of the *environment* on the one hand and *heredity* on the other, as if they were two fixed things always struggling to adjust to each other. But when we think about it we see that both environment and heredity *are not fixed but they vary together*.

## 2. Divisions of the Physical Background of Philosophy.

—With the above suggestions in mind we shall consider now the physical background of philosophy from the two stand-points:

- (a) physiological,
- (b) environmental.

The center of interest from the physiological standpoint is that of sex. Our question is: what problems originate from the physiological differences between the sexes, which are important for philosophy? We are to understand from the outset that *what one does determines what one thinks about*, and what one does is *partly conditioned by one's physiological abilities and disabilities*. The first great point to be recognized is that it is upon the physiological differences between the sexes that a division of labor is based. Herbert

Spencer divides the life of the history of civilization into two great periods—militancy and industrialism; but as has been suggested by Mason,<sup>1</sup> it seems more in keeping with the facts to speak not of an *age* of militancy, but a *sex* of militancy; not an *age* of industrialism, but a *sex* of industrialism. In short, women did the work and the men did the fighting—a fact which developed a peculiar type of mind for each sex. In primitive society woman and man had to a great extent different food, different occupations and consequently different mental types and social attitudes.<sup>2</sup>

Woman, the bearer and protector of the child, must stay near the lodge; her movements are hindered; her home is more permanent; her food, consequently, is that which can be found near at home, such as roots, berries, herbs, and fruits, and when these are not to be found the great progressive step is then made, namely, cultivation of the land—a step due to woman's need.

What are some of the other effects of the physiological differences of sex? It makes woman the worker in the vegetable world. Her whole life is built up about the staples used for bread, whether it be the taro and bread fruit of Polynesia; or the palm, tapioca, millet, or yams of Africa; or the rice of Asia; or the cereals of Europe; or the corn and potatoes of America. All the occupations grouped about any vegetal industry, such as the gathering, transportation, and the activities necessary to a change from the raw to the cooked state, are those of woman. Thus she is the food bringer, the ancestor of freight trains, granaries, and mills. Her life leads her to take up and develop weaving—at first using the twigs about her, but later developing raw material for clothing. Among the Alaska Indians the

<sup>1</sup>O. T. Mason, *Woman's Share in Primitive Culture*, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>E. S. Ames, *The Psychology of Religious Experience*, pp. 35 ff.

ceremonials of initiation for girls, beginning at the dawn of puberty, emphasize the domestic duties which as a woman she must perform; she sews the skins of the squirrel into blankets, makes mats, and grinds the grain. She learns the virtues of the woman, self-denial, temperance, and quietness, through fasting for four days and thereupon tasting of water and grease, she begins with another period of four days of fasting. Woman skins the game and learns to tan the hides for clothing. "If aught in the heavens above, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters wore a skin, savage women were found on examination to have a name for it, and to have succeeded in turning it into its primitive use for human clothing, and to have invented new uses undreamed of by its original owner." She is also the potter, the first ceramic artisan, the beast of burden, and is vitally connected with the origin and development of language.

Many theories have been advanced to account for the origin of language, among them being the interjectional, the mimetic, and the intuitive; and while an element of truth may be present in each of them, it is certain that woman has played an important part in the development of speech as related to invention and occupation, to its spread, and to its change. Woman gathers her food in packs, in gangs, or groups, making it possible for her to chatter with her fellows, since her food is still, inert; man, on the contrary, hunts *live* things, so he becomes silent and taciturn. Gender comes about through the personification of the results of labor of the sexes. Because the sailor is "attached" to his ship he calls it "she." Woman aids in the spreading of language as a result of the custom of capture, thereby enriching the language and consequently the thought of those among whom she was brought.

It is woman as the founder of society that is of chief in-



terest to us. "Through her sexually determined manner of life she becomes the center of the social group." As the female bird makes the nest, or the female mammal digs the burrow for her young, or the female bee makes the honeycomb for her young, so does woman provide the surroundings essential to the survival of her offspring. Of the home itself woman invented the industrial portion while man invented the defensive. A man's house is and always has been *his castle*, but for the woman, it is more than a castle—it is *her home*, the seat of her labors and interests. The woman group is dominated by sympathy and mutual aid, and this attitude is not wholly lost to man for he becomes sympathetic, ready to assist in matters pertaining to others.

Man, on the other hand, is the hunter and fighter. His food-getting activities and his love are all built upon the chase. Wife capture is a form of the chase. Great emphasis has been placed by some on the significance of the method of getting food in determining the type of mind which is developed. In this connection Professor Dewey says, "The occupations determine the chief modes of satisfaction, the standard of success and failure. Hence, they furnish the working classifications and definitions of value; they control the desire process. Moreover, they decide the sets of objects and relations which are important, and thereby provide the content or material of attention and the qualities that are interestingly significant. The directions given to mental life thereby extend to emotional and intellectual characteristics. *So fundamental and pervasive is the group of occupational activities that it affords the scheme or pattern of the structural organization of the mental traits.*"<sup>3</sup> It is, as Professor Dewey goes on to show, per-

<sup>3</sup>John Dewey, *Interpretation of the Savage Mind*, Psychological Review, 1902, p. 217. Italics not in the original.

missible to speak of a hunting type, military, pastoral, agricultural, and the manufacturing type of mental life. The increase of population which has resulted in the destruction of game has brought about newer methods of getting food, has developed new occupations, and consequently, new mental types.

Man, the hunter and fighter, developed initiative, spontaneity, alertness, and cunning by the very necessities of his activities. This accounts for the fact that in the social affairs of the group man is the leader; he is the master of the ceremonials, even though these reflect the occupation, interests, and pursuits of women. In general the content of ceremonials is woman's but the form is man's. The social aspects, the content, are sympathy, mutual aid, solidarity—these come largely from woman's part in the battles of the group; but the form by which these attitudes are expressed, such as the dance, the priesthood, the incantation, and symbols, belongs chiefly to man. The Australian initiation ceremonials illustrate the motor type of mind which man possesses, while the ceremonials for adolescent girls as practiced by the Alaskan Indians, illustrate vividly the type of mentality prized in the woman. Man has always until very recently assumed leadership in political, social, religious, and military life, due in great part to the long history back of the activities connected with the chase. With the coming of new methods of making a living, based on other agents than bone and brawn, we witness woman taking her place in the fields of activity, with the natural result that she is assuming the leadership in aspects of industry, politics, religion, and other forms of social life formerly reserved for men.

This new feature of our civilization is just beginning to be expressed in the philosophy of the times, and it is the

task of the philosophy of the future as manifested in scientific, social, industrial, and political life to adjust to these changes wrought by different methods of meeting the elemental necessities of life. We may expect, for example, a greater emphasis in protestant religion on the feminine aspects of it; a more humanitarian ideal of government; a revival of idealism in some form in the domain of philosophy; a literature more romantic, appealing for greater social solidarity, but lacking in ruggedness of style. In the practical applications of theory, as in methods of punishment and in the distribution of goods, we shall see an increasing contribution of woman's nature built up through the long ages of toil in the domestic pursuits of the group.

(b) We have indicated some of the results of the physiological differences between the sexes and our purpose now is to inquire into some of the effects of the physical environment on the type of society which is developed in that environment, and the kind of thinking that flourishes therein. We must guard against the tendency of making the environment the sole factor in the determination of a people, for we have seen that there are psychological factors which must be considered. The environment in a large way determines the course which the instincts must take, but, as we have found, the two great needs of any people are food and reproduction regardless of the environment—a fact that accounts for similarity of customs in diverse parts of the world. This being the case, the environment is powerful in shaping the direction which these needs must travel to find satisfaction. In one part of the world the sea dominates with the result that commerce soon assumes great proportions; in another the fertile lands call out an agricultural life; while on the great plains the herder flourishes. These facts are especially valuable when we consider that they determine largely



the outlook on life of a people, shape their methods of solving problems, determine the content of their categories of value, fix the virtues, and in general mark out the lines within which their speculative as well as their practical thinking takes place.

We can readily see how this is possible when we reflect that "Man is the product of the earth's surface—that the earth has mothered him, fed him, set him tasks, directed his thoughts, confronted him with difficulties that have strengthened his body and sharpened his wits, given him his problems of navigation or irrigation, and at the same time whispered hints for their solution. She has entered into his bone and tissue, into his mind and soul. On the mountain she has given him leg muscles of iron to climb the slope; along the coast she has left these weak and flabby, but has given him instead vigorous development of chest and arm to handle his paddle or oar. In the river valley she attaches him to the fertile soil, circumscribes his ideas and ambitions by a dull round of calm, exacting duties, narrows his outlook to the cramped horizon of his farm. Up on the wind-swept plateaus, in the boundless stretch of grass-lands and the waterless tracts of the desert, when he roams with his flocks from pasture to pasture and from oasis to oasis, where life knows much hardship but escapes the grind of drudgery, where the watching of grazing herd gives him leisure for contemplation, and the wide-ranging life a big horizon, his ideas take on a certain gigantic simplicity; religion becomes monotheism, God becomes one, unrivalled like the sand of the desert or the grass of the steppe, stretching on and on without break or change. Chewing over and over the cud of his simple belief as the one food of unfed mind, his faith becomes fanaticism; his big spatial ideas born of that ceaseless wandering outgrow the land that bred them

and bear their legitimate fruit in wide imperial conquests.”<sup>4</sup>

(1) Some of the physical factors which are influential in shaping the history of a people will be mentioned here, for if these factors are influential in shaping history it is certain that they figure in the philosophy of that people for a philosophy is nothing more than the most highly generalized and carefully articulated conceptions which account for the facts in their experience. Their philosophy depends upon their stage of development, their social organization, their methods of doing things—in short, philosophy is always an aspect of the life interests and activities of a people.

We want to indicate some of the factors which help to fashion the philosophy of a people, which help to mold the hypotheses which are advanced as an explanation of their life and interests. These hypotheses or theories always come long after a form of social organization has been effected, and when man begins to try to account for the facts about him, he always projects his social life into his explanations. This is the chief reason for our discussion of the various backgrounds of philosophy—the backgrounds tell us what the later developments will be.

The physical fact of remoteness has been powerful as a factor in shaping the ideals of a people. The ancient Roman consul in far-off Britain often assumed an independence of action unknown among the provincial governors of Gaul. Centuries later Roman Catholicism in England maintained a similar independence towards the mother church. Both of these facts are in part the results of remoteness from the center of authority. The remoteness of the thirteen colonies from the mother country made it possible for the former to assert themselves in the formation of a great democracy.

<sup>4</sup> Sample, *Influences of Geographic Environment*, pp. 1-2.

The effect of nearness is equally significant. The history of Greece is intimately tied up with that of Asia because Greek thought has always been mingled with the more mystical Asiatic strain; Greek culture with Asiatic culture; and the legendary history of Greece is tied up with that of Asia.

Natural barriers such as mountains and deserts are persistent factors. The Carpathian Mountains divided the Slavic hordes into two streams, the one to the north into the plains of Germany and Poland, the other into the valley of the Danube and thence to the Adriatic and to the Alps. We witnessed some of the results of this division in the late world war. The Alps made it possible to develop a great society in Italy free from the barbarian of the north, and rendered possible the survival of Rome for a much longer period than would have been the case otherwise. Our own Rockies barred the weaker ones from the Oregon and California countries, checked the free movement of laborers to the factories there, thereby tightening the hold of the labor unions on the industries of the coast.

Natural highways, rivers, lake chains, make possible the free movement of peoples and are thus important factors in history. The Danube valley has admitted into Europe a long list of invaders from Attila, the Hun, to the besiegers of Vienna in 1683. This valley has been the scene of warring tribes and unassimilated races for hundreds of years, and played its last great rôle in the recent war. The road-bed of the Pennsylvania Railroad between New York and Philadelphia covers the trail of the Lenni-Lenapi Indians, which later was the old Dutch road from New Amsterdam and the Delaware trading posts, and still later the King's highway, and in 1838 it became the route of the Delaware and Raritan canal.

Climatic influences have often been exaggerated, but it is certain that these are powerful. Extreme cold has held



back the development of the arctic regions, permitting only two inhabitants to the square mile. Just so extreme heat tends to debilitate and weaken the fiber of a people.

(2) We recount a few of the effects of the physical environmental factors, and leave to the interested reader the references at the end of the chapter.

Mountains and the deltaic swamps of the Indus and Ganges and the coastal marshes and lagoons on the east have shut India out from direct intercourse with the rest of the world. The result is that we find them superstitious, immutable in their religious and social customs, and highly ignorant. Their overwrought imagination has been accounted for by Buckle<sup>5</sup> from the fact of their living in the presence of great plains and high mountains such that the reason is overpowered and paralyzed. In Greece, on the contrary, where reason flourished, the natural features were on a smaller scale such that they could easily be compassed by man's reason. In this connection Treitschke<sup>6</sup> points out that the lower hill country of Swabia and Franconia, where nature is gentler, has produced the great majority of poets and artists. The rough highlands of Savoy, the Alpine country and the province of Brittany have produced but few if any great artists. These facts may be due to both isolation and the overpowering of the reason by the natural surroundings. Mountain countries seldom furnish men of great genius because they are far removed from the currents of action, they permit no leisure but demand incessant toil to meet the immediate needs of life. The fertile plains, on the other hand, are the seat of wealth, luxury, and leisure and permit that freedom of intercourse necessary to the formation of art, science and philosophy.

<sup>5</sup> Buckle, Henry, *History of Civilization in England*, Vol. I, pp. 86-106.

<sup>6</sup> Treitschke, *Politik*, Vol. I, pp. 225 ff.

These factors function in the political and social life of a people. Plutarch states that after the rebellion of Kylon in 612 B. C., the people of Athens were divided into three political parties corresponding to the three physical types of country. The mountaineers, the poorest of all, wanted a democracy; the people of the plains, the richest of all, were anxious for an oligarchy; the coast people, intermediate between the two in wealth and in social position, wanted something between a democracy and an oligarchy. In the Civil War, West Virginia became a state because the people of the mountains could not profit by slave labor, and as an index of their temper they chose as their motto, "*Montani Semper Liberi*." Back of the strong abolition spirit in New England stood rocky farms, as back of the Hartford convention stood the profitable sea trade. Thus we see that our moral and political philosophy is often determined by the conditions which make for success in our food getting activities.

The effects of the environment on man's physical body have been carefully discussed since the time of Darwin. Many of the physical peculiarities if not all are determined by the nature of the physical features of the habitat of the people in question. Man and his environment grow to fit. The great lung capacity of those living in high altitudes; the thickness of skin and hair; the color of the animal; the stature of individuals; the small size of wild animals in mountain regions in comparison with the same species in the lowlands; the dwarfed horses in Iceland, and in the Shetlands and Sardinia; the low stature of the peoples in the poorer districts in Europe; the greater stature of the Hottentots who are pastoral over their kinsmen the Bushmen; the stunted Snake Indians of the Rocky Mountains as against the buffalo hunters of the plains; the thin legs and

thick arms of the Indians along the Paraguay river—all these are associated with the efforts at a “fit” between man and his surroundings.

We are more concerned with the psychical effects of the physical environment. They, of course, are bound up with the physical effects, but we wish to separate them for emphasis. Different races possess different temperaments, and the differences prevail in the same race and even in the same locality. It is probable that the temperaments have a physiological basis—that, for example, phthisis renders one buoyant and happy, et cetera, resulting in the fact that man’s view of life in a very large way is tied up with his temperaments. This fact had led some one to say that a man’s philosophy depends upon his temperament, a statement which contains an element of truth. Anyway, man’s environment is reflected in his religion, his law, and his literature. Blackstone states that “in the Isle of Man, to take away a horse or an ox was no felony, but a trespass, because of the difficulty in that little country to conceal them or to carry them off; but to steal a pig or a fowl, which is easily done, was a capital misdemeanor, and the offender punished with death.”<sup>7</sup> Greek cosmography is a reflection of their environment; Eskimo hell is dark and cold; the Jew’s is a place of everlasting fire; Buddhism looks upon heaven as the cessation of all activity, and we little wonder that this is so when we think of the incessant struggle against the steaming heat and humidity of the Himalayan lowlands.

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF PHILOSOPHY

1. **Introductory.**—We come more directly to the problems of philosophy in a treatment of the social conditions out of which speculative thinking arises. We should keep in mind that the psychological agencies which we have discussed in a former chapter operate in a physical environment, and that these two agencies, psychical and physical, mutually cooperate in the formation of a social environment. It is essential again to call attention to the fact that primitive man does not start with a ready-made system of adjustments, that is, with fully developed instinctive responses and mechanisms of responses, but these very responses and mechanisms grow up in the course of the long period that has elapsed since man first appeared on the earth. Also, that the physical environment is itself not fixed in advance but *becomes*, grows, as man develops and grows. The physical aspects of New York City, for example, are by no means what they were in the days of the Dutch traders. Thus the physical and the psychical aspects which we may distinguish for purposes of description, grow up together, the one being the complement of the other. But the resultant of the mutual play of these two phases or aspects of experience is what we shall call the social environment.

As far as primitive man is concerned this social environment is his philosophy, his science, his religion, his law, and

his government, and, indeed, all other modes of action which we separate, divide, and classify. The same is true as far as the civilized and highly cultured man is concerned. His social environment includes all these specialized methods of behavior, but the difference between the primitive and the cultured man is that the latter clearly differentiates these fields of action, evaluates them, and behaves towards each in keeping with the value he attaches to it. Philosophy for cultured man is a highly technical and specialized way of looking at things. At least this is what people usually believe it to be, and if we go deeply into certain theories we may be convinced that the belief is well-founded; but for primitive man the whole undifferentiated mass of custom is his philosophy, if we agree to use the term in this extended form. *The history of progress is precisely the history of the differentiation of methods of meeting and evaluating the problems which confront a people.* From the standpoint just stated the degree of advancement of a people or an age in the history of the world can be estimated by the degree of specialization which prevailed in their society. Broadly speaking, there have been but two great periods of high intellectual achievement in the history of the world, namely, that of the Greeks in the time of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle; and that of the modern world from about 1500 to our own time. In these two periods specialization, differentiation, individuation are the key words.

As the social conditions reflect the physical and psychological backgrounds out of which and upon which they are developed, so does philosophy as we understand it in cultured society reflect the social conditions from which it has arisen and of which it is a part. The philosophy of a period is an expression of the "nature and life and society in terms



of collective human desires and aspiration as these were determined by contemporary difficulties and struggle.”<sup>1</sup> In the same way that we speak of eighteenth century literature, dress, or modes of travel, we may speak of eighteenth century philosophy.

Each age, time, period, is dominated by certain ideals which in turn are a reflection of that age; but because of the continuity of culture, because the past lives in the present in the form of books and art, we find it more difficult to point out the actual contributions of a people as opposed to what they have inherited.

These introductory remarks are intended to emphasize the relations between the social environment and the type of philosophy which is an expression of it, for it is this way that we account for continuity in development. For example, we are told by the historians of philosophy that philosophy began with the Greeks. This is a statement which is true under certain conditions only and if we define philosophy as we employ the term here, it is not true at all; for our position is that the lowest savage has a philosophy and this is his way of life. It is true that it may not be of a very exalted type, but for him it answers his purposes as well as the most highly elaborated and detailed theory answers the purposes of the professional philosopher. As we indicated above, his ways of life are non-differentiated, and if we were to select a word or term to cover all his methods of reaction, we could do no better than to employ the term so common at this time, namely, Custom. Custom is all—science, law, philosophy. Within recent years there has been a growing tendency to treat the elaborate forms of action, such as our moral behavior or ethics, as growing out of the backgrounds which we have discussed, plus the social

<sup>1</sup>Dewey, John, *German Philosophy and Politics*, pp. 10-11.

background which is our immediate problem here. By the social background we mean the conglomerate of science, religion, and social organization which prevailed in primitive society. Later when we speak of particular philosophical theories the relation between the prevailing social organization and the type of philosophy developed will be discussed, but here we have in mind the chaos of customs of primitive life.

The hypothesis was advanced earlier that our elaborate forms of behavior are founded on two prime necessities, namely, food getting activities and reproduction of the species. We have indicated how these needs split up into more definite instinctive reactions and our purpose here is to show that the elaborate customs of primitive society are built on these ground forms. The various forms of social life are the occupations, the relations between the sexes, folk-ways, and various ceremonials involving magic and myth—the early science, philosophy, and religion of man. The customs that are of the greatest importance are those which are connected with the getting and the distribution of food, the birth of children, marriage, initiation ceremonials which are the high school education of the primitive adolescent, and rites connected with death, and war.

**2. The Nature of Primitive Social Life.**—Primitive social life is a life of custom, more rigid and binding than modern man generally thinks. The crime of primitive society is the breaking of custom, for in this way injury comes to the group and not to the individual who breaks the custom. Departures from custom are *taboo*. That is, taboo is the negative side of custom. "The customs are the thou-shalts, and the taboos are the thou-shalt-nots of primitive life."<sup>2</sup> How do these customs get started? Various answers have

<sup>2</sup> Ames, E. S., *The Psychology of Religious Experience*, p. 52.

been offered. It is probable that as good an answer as can be given is that they originated through luck or accidental, successful ways of meeting the demands of the situation which they cover.

Man's behavior becomes habitual through repetition, and ways of acting which have brought success have been handed down, while other ways become taboo. The trial and error method certainly is the chief one by which knowledge is acquired not only by primitive man but by civilized man as well. Our most elaborate rational processes are not fully proved or tested until they have been acted upon. So we may safely say that customs have grown up about successful ways of action induced by the primitive needs of mankind, and that they are not originally based on ideas of success, plans in advance of the occasion of their formation, or as Professor Sumner states it, "From recurrent needs arise habits for the individual and customs for the group, but these results are consequences which were never conscious and never foreseen or intended." Then again certain methods of action appeal to a people. Aside from the useful and the lucky, "there is the more immediate reaction of individuals or groups to certain ways of acting according 'as things jump with the feelings or displease them.'"<sup>3</sup>

**3. Taboo.**—As custom centers about the occupations and other forms of social life and activities of the group, lending themselves to the positive aspects of experience, so does taboo revolve about the same experiences as a negative factor. The things which possess taboo most powerfully are sex, leaders, strangers, and the dead. Sex taboos extend both to the person and to the occupations of the members. We have spoken of the physiological factors of sex as determining in part the type of mental life of the individual,

<sup>3</sup>Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 54.



but in this connection it should be pointed out that on the psychology of habit formation these modes of reaction earlier determined by physiological necessity become fixed modes of response, or custom, which can not be violated except in approved ways. In other words, *the physiological fact of sex is a center for a wide range of customs and taboos, that is of early science, philosophy and religion.* Woman has generally been debarred from the public and civil rights which have been accorded man. This is an extension of the biological difference of occupation, sometimes exaggerated into seclusion among polygamous races, and into somewhat of inferiority in martial and feudal societies. The habits of man who is motor, martial, aggressive, are opposed to those of woman who is docile and submissive, due to the conditions under which each has struggled to live. The taboos between the sexes are gradually being broken down in the presence of other ways of living, different means of evaluating conduct, and changed social and political conditions.

Great men, chiefs, kings, and priests are taboo; they are set apart, consecrated, sanctified. They have gained their positions because they have been powerful leaders in wars, and in other forms of group life. Once having gained leadership through some service to the group the right of chieftainship or kingship is handed down to members of the family or to others closely associated with the chief or king. In our own society we note how persistent is the taboo on rulers, great men, high church officials, and others. So persistent is this fact that some have explained customs of religion and others as well as the devices of priests and rulers for the purpose of keeping themselves and their class in power. It is more in keeping with sound psychological principles, however, to account for these facts on the prin-

ciple of habit formation, driven on by the instinct of self subjection and its correlate. It has been one of the great problems of government to break down the taboos which have grown up about rulers. We have just witnessed the tragedy of those who rule by "divine right." The taboos which have been built up about them have been broken down and they have been subjected to the rightful punishment of the common man. Viewed from one standpoint it would be possible to write the whole of political history as a gradual breakdown of taboos on rulers and chiefs. The highest achievement in this respect is found in the democracy in which, theoretically at least, "every man counts as one." The development of religion follows the same route—the gradual breaking of taboos on priests, medicine men, and religious institutions in general. For example, it is a recent fact of great significance that religious phenomena have yielded to psychological, and hence, scientific, treatment, the theory before being that matters of sacred and divine import would be debauched by being submitted to scientific methods.

Accordingly in custom and taboo we witness the "funded" experience of a people—their method of response to those needs which must be gratified if the group is to survive; and in higher forms of society those customs which, while being elaborations on primitive needs, embody the spiritual ideals of the group.

**4. Various Types of Custom.**—We have now to consider some of the principal customs of primitive society with the following idea primarily in mind: With what are the customs concerned? About what do they center?

A possible origin of custom has been suggested in the psychology of habit, in which successful ways of action discovered by trial and error become fixed and handed down in

ceremonials of initiation and by imitation. But the time comes in the history of the race when reflection on these customs arises, and at that point we have theoretical knowledge or the speculative achievements of primitive man. Man unconsciously develops a type of social organization just as we develop a language, but it is not until much later that he attempts to *explain* his social life or that he writes his grammar. He gains an immense store of practical knowledge such as the making of bows and arrows, traps for animals, axes, boats, and bridges before he asks for *principles*. But a time does come when *principles* are demanded and at this point science and philosophy as we think of them are born. We shall later have occasion to enumerate some of the agencies which compel a search for principles, which, that is, demand a reconstruction of custom or habitual modes of action. *Such a process involves consciousness of the reflective, and hence, critical type.*

(a) *Sacrifice.* We shall begin our discussion of ceremonials and their purposes with sacrifice, the basic and characteristic act of which is that of eating food and this is generally the staple food of the group.<sup>4</sup> Sacrifice, in other words, is fundamentally a food process, though in higher forms of society this fact is more or less disguised. Originally the totem animal was the staple article of food, and was itself sacrificed, but later when it became rare, sacrifices were made to it. Spencer and Gillen,<sup>5</sup> in their elaborate studies of the primitive tribes of Australia, say that the purpose of sacrificial ceremonials is to increase the food supply. The eating of the totem animal became taboo due

<sup>4</sup> "Sacrifices, from the lowest to the highest levels of culture, consist, to the extent of nine tenths or more, of gifts of food and sacred banquets." Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. II, p. 397.

<sup>5</sup> *Native Tribes of Central Australia and Northern Tribes of Central Australia.*



to a scarcity and no member is permitted to eat of it except at the ceremonial feast. The uncertainty of the food supply and the indispensable need for food rendered ceremonials for its increase of deep and lasting significance. As Crawley says, "The food quest provides the earliest illustration of the way in which (primitive man) lays hold of life. It is the most engrossing fact of primitive existence. Man's daily bread thus becomes the object of innumerable acts of caution and superstition."<sup>6</sup>

(1) *Sacrificial Rites and Totemism.* Sacrificial rites are closely connected with totemism, a word taken from the language of the Ojibway Indians, and which means that man has descended from an animal, and in some cases from a plant, ancestor. The animal or plant from which the group had its origin is one closely connected with their food supply, and indeed usually forms the staple article. The Intichiuma ceremonials described by Spencer and Gillen and by Howitt, have as their object the increase of the totem. Grass seed is thrown broadcast by the members of the grass seed totem, and a huge lizard is formed by the members of the lizard totem, and parts of it thrown about, all for the purpose of a direct appeal to the totem to multiply itself by virtue of the magical power which it possesses. The increase in the totem is as a matter of course a benefit to the group in a substantial way for it relieves hunger, and in addition gives power to the group. Since the totem group comes from a common ancestor the eating of the totem animal gives the group the magical power of the animal itself. It is significant that at this stage the sacrifice is not made *to* the ancestor or *to* the god, but it is the god or ancestor itself that is sacrificed. Thus the group received directly the sacredness, taboo, or magic of the object eaten.

The eating of other food objects than the totem for the

<sup>6</sup>Quoted from Ames, *Op. cit.*, pp. 120-21.

purposes of gaining power is common. Cannibal feasts are probably to be explained on the principle that the magic of the powerful enemy is transferred to the feasters. The youth, at the initiation ceremonies, may be fed from the organs of powerful enemies. "The liver gives valor, the ears intelligence, the skin of the forehead perseverance." The North American Indian eats venison to gain swiftness and cunning, but he avoids the clumsy bear, tame cattle, and slow moving swine, so that he may not gain their qualities, because these qualities are detrimental to the conception of the "virtues" which have been built up out of the essential activities for group survival. South American Indians eat birds, fish, monkeys, and deer, but avoid the peccary and tapir; Africans eat the meat and drink the blood of lions and tigers so that they may become strong and mighty in battle.

(2) *The Occasions of Sacrifice.* Any unusual, non-habitual occurrence may call for sacrifice. When the security of a people is broken, when they are weakened by death, war, pestilence, or famine, or when something unusual is about to take place, such as a battle or an eclipse, then the rites of sacrifice are in order. They may occur also at stated intervals such as at the beginning of the seasons and the opening of the hunting season for certain game. In fact every happening which calls for a closer union among the group and between the group and their ancestor or the unseen power is an occasion for sacrifice.

When taboos have actually been broken, when sin has been committed, and when the consequences have to be dealt with we have sacrifices known as *rites of purification*. When the sick regain health, when the women return to camp after childbirth,<sup>7</sup> when mourners return from the funeral, rites of sacrifice are generally performed. Water is

<sup>7</sup> Leviticus, Ch. XII.

commonly employed in these rites because it is sacred and mysterious. Any method of coming in contact with it is employed—drinking, sprinkling, or bathing. Blood and fire are sometimes used because they are also sacred and impart sacredness to whatever they come in contact with.

(3) *What is done in Sacrifice?* We have said that the purpose of sacrifice is to come in contact with a sacred object in order to become possessed of its sacredness. It unites the members of the group with the powers which they believe to control them. Then again come the rites of atonement for sin either of omission or of commission. We are better acquainted with Hebrew sacrificial rites as given in the Old Testament, and we are therefore better able to discover the purpose of them by an examination of Hebrew customs. The earliest Hebrews were shepherds and nomads, the sheep being the most important animal of their experience, and hence their totem animal. The oldest feast of the Hebrews, the Passover, is a survival of the totemic stage. Remembering that the sacrificed animal was itself the deity, it is evident that those who ate of it gained the sacredness and magical qualities of the deity. When they entered the rich country to the west they became war-like and their desert gods became gods of war. An agricultural life carried many changes in their customs, among which was the substitution of the bull as the sacred animal instead of the sheep as in their nomadic days, because cattle became the chief food animal. This fact is reflected in their religious life in that the bull was a symbol for Yaweh, their God. This symbol was set up in the various shrines and even in the temple at Jerusalem.

In modern Christianity we witness the oldest ideas of sacrifice. "The Passover determines the conceptions which center in Mass or the Lord's Supper. The communicant



partakes of the magic life, literally by eating the body and drinking the blood; or ideally by employing bread and wine as symbols." Baptism as practiced in modern churches is also a survival of ancient rites of purification in which the sins are "washed away." "The sacramental doctrines and customs of religion spring from the living and perennial superstition of the masses. They exist not merely because it is the fashion to cultivate them, but also because the magic and mystery which they involve are native to unenlightened minds." <sup>8</sup>

(b) *Initiation Ceremonials.* We wish next to consider ceremonials of initiation, one of the chief aspects of early custom. These customs have to deal more directly with interests connected with the reproduction of the species, such as marriage, birth, and relations between the sexes; whereas sacrifices were more intimately related to food processes. These ceremonials are the objective regimen to which youths have been subjected as they cross the threshold from childhood to maturity. They are for primitive and savage man the method of transmission to the young of the ideals, aspirations, and interests of the group. We can best understand them if we think of the high school education of the modern boy or girl, in which the attempt is made to acquaint the adolescent with the culture of the race for the purpose of providing such with instruments the better to meet the problems, demands, and needs of our time; and to indicate methods by which the ideals, aims, purposes, and aspirations may be refined and purified. As our high schools give the youth those principles which have been found valuable in coping with our civilization, so do the initiation ceremonials acquaint the youth of primitive culture with the elements which are deemed valuable by the group;

<sup>8</sup> Ames, *Opus cit.*, p. 192.

and just as we are able to determine the ideals of a period by a consideration of the curriculum, so may we discover the values of those whose ceremonials we study.

In the lowest types of savagery it is highly probable that the ceremonials of initiation are purely a matter of custom, i. e., there are no ideas or ideals involved at all, no reflection on the inner significance of the rites; but even so, they represent the type of thing that the group responds to necessarily.

By the method of trial and error certain habits of response have been built up and these habits are handed down to the young members of the group, who are about to assume the duties and activities of full members. Consequently, if, in the initiation ceremonials as in sacrifice, we study what is done rather than what is believed, we shall not be tempted to found them upon too firm an ideal background or to search too seriously for the ideas that underlie them. In our interpretation of these phenomena we may do what is permissible, namely, to seek for the causes of them as the facts surrounding warrant; but it is not permissible to ascribe to the savage and primitive man the lofty conceptions of duty, which are found in civilized ethical theories, or abstract notions of cause and effect which have become the possession of civilized man only at the expense of endless experimental research. An example or two will show the general form of the ceremonial of initiation and will make evident the "virtues" of those who practice them—those elements which are deemed of value to such as would be members of the group.

(1) *Ceremonial of the American Aborigines.* "In the life of the Thlinkett there is almost nothing between childhood and adult age. Youth, that delicious pause between infancy and maturity, has no place in his experience. At the age when our children are barely ready to lay aside

pinafore and short trousers, Alaskan boys and girls are declared to be old enough to marry and begin life for themselves." The first great event in the life of the Thlinkett girl was her arrival at maturity. She was banished for six months in a small out-house from which she could not stir. During the period she was kept busy sewing squirrel skins into blankets, and weaving hats and baskets, the object of which was to teach her the virtues of woman, to wit, patience and industry. On the first day of her retreat, a small pin was inserted through her lower lip, which was changed to a labret on her wedding day. She was taught self-denial by being tempted by food and drink of which she was deprived for four days. She must not move about lest she acquire habits of restlessness, nor must she talk lest she become a scold. After the period, she made her *début*. At this coming-out feast she was introduced to all the young men of the opposite phratry and, dressed in her best, stood on an elevation while being examined by all the young men. "If she were healthy and industrious, modest and reserved, spoke slowly, quietly, and moved deliberately, and especially if she had gained a reputation for unusual industry and skill, suitors abounded and she was soon married."<sup>9</sup>

The Brazilian girl's experience is more trying. Endurance is the chief virtue here as is seen in the ceremonials. She is secluded for a month and is fed on bread and water. She is brought out before her parents and friends, and each person present gives her six licks across the back and breast with a *sipo*, until she falls senseless or dead. If she recovers, it is repeated every six hours, and it is considered an offense to parents not to strike hard. Meats and fish are made ready, the *sipos* are dipped in them and given her to lick; then she is a woman and is ready for marriage.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Quoted from Hall, G. S., *Adolescence*, Vol. II, p. 233.

<sup>10</sup> Walker, A. R., *Travels on the Amazon*, p. 325.



(2) *Initiation Ceremonials of the Africans.* Frazer has made interesting studies of the ceremonials of the African Zulus and neighboring tribes. We shall state briefly some of the points of the Zulu ceremonial. At the first signs of puberty the girl must hide, not be seen by men, cover her head, lest the sun shrivel her, and seclude herself for some time in a hut. In New Ireland girls at this age are confined for four or five years, kept in small cages in the dark, and not allowed to set foot on the ground. The cages are small and hot but are clean and the girls are taken out once a day to bathe; in these cages they remain until they are taken out to be married and attend the great feast which is a part of the ceremony. Poor people can afford to keep their daughters thus shut up but a few weeks, but the time increases with wealth and station.

It will be noticed that the feast is usually an important element in the marriage ceremonial. We have, therefore, in marriage both of the great interests of life present.

Every tribe of the present day has ceremonials of the nature we have just indicated. Not only are these found in primitive and in present savage tribes, but they have been topics of supreme interest throughout the development of civilization. If we take the tribes of Australia, the early Jews, the people of Borneo, New Guinea, or of any other place, we shall find some form of initiation ceremonial centering about the interests of reproduction. The wide prevalence, indeed, the universal prevalence of the ceremonial is highly suggestive.

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## CHAPTER V

### AGENCIES IN THE ADVANCE FROM CUSTOM TO REFLECTION

1. **Introductory.**—We have discussed some of the types of action of primitive man as manifested in ceremonials of sacrifice and initiation. As far as it was possible to do so we emphasized *what was done rather than what was believed*, for it is a common fallacy to treat these customs from the standpoint of the scholar and not from that of the primitive thinker or actor himself. We reason that since a certain type of action in our experience involves a *plan* that all action is consciously purposive, involves aims, objects, and ideals. The dog, while he makes adjustments which meet the needs of his existence, certainly does not form *free* ideas involving plans of acts to be done; and we shall be closer to the facts of primitive experience if we think of it as a body of habits involving the minimum of conscious reflection. *Action is primary and appears long before reflection.*

2. **The Levels of Conduct.**—Psychologists recognize at least three levels of conduct. They are the instinctive, the habitual, and the conscious. Speaking generally, we may say that the instinctive level represents and is correlated with what we have spoken of as the psychological background of philosophy. The psychological aspects of habit are, when transferred to group life, what we have discussed as group custom or *mores*, or the social background of philosophy. When treated socially conscious behavior or conduct becomes the science, philosophy, and all the other



types of action, and methods of behavior which we have in mind when we speak of the reflective and speculative work of mankind.

Instinctive action meets the demands of an organism up to a certain point in its development. Its difficulties are not numerous, its modes of response, though highly elaborate in many cases, are more or less certain in their end or aim—the aim being of course not a conscious one in the individual organism. Habitual action, likewise, does not involve the use of the high brain centers but is carried on almost automatically. But psychologically, there are times in the life of the highest organism when these modes of behavior break down. There are crises which can not be met on these two lower methods of behavior, and *it is at the point of the breakdown of instinctive and habitual responses that consciousness arises.*

As it is at the point of breakdown of customary modes of response that consciousness arises in the individual thinker, so it is that reflection as a social and objective undertaking has its origin in the breakdown of customs. *Progress, that is, takes place only at the point of conflict between some new fact and the group of customs believed or at least accepted as valuable.* Consequently, in the advance from customs which are merely accepted to customs which are accepted because they are *chosen*, we have to search for those conflicts which arose in primitive life, which brought about these changes. In so doing we are not introducing new factors, but we shall see at work a clash of interests founded on the very facts which we have already considered, namely, activities for food and for the race, and the various modifications of these as we noticed in the several instinctive tendencies in man. That is, through a clash of interests for the satisfaction of man's elemental needs, these very in-

instincts and habits built about them are transcended, and we reach a higher level of action based on acceptance after a survey of the facts. There is a world of difference between the customs of a primitive group accepted blindly and those of an advanced civilized people which have been accepted, in part at least, because they are the best methods of accounting for the facts of experience; but the important likeness consists in this, that the customs of the primitive man as well as those of the highly civilized are group habits built up to meet the problems which confront or which have confronted them.

**3. Agencies in the Breakdown of Custom.**—What are some of the factors which make for an advance over instinctive and habitual or customary modes of action? In answer to this question we have to inquire into some of the causes of the *clash* of interests among men, for, as we intimated, progress and advancement take place in a conflict between something already in operation and some other fact which does not square with what is accepted. At a still higher level of development we shall find the conflict to center about the interests of the individual as against those of the group as a whole. It is in such a struggle that *individualism* as against group life gains in prominence and influence. Early man, however, is engaged in the food quest, making tools and crude houses, fighting and making slaves of the conquered, satisfying his emotional life in song, the dance, and physical contests, and winning women for wives. All these activities are carried on habitually; but a time comes when reflection is essential to group survival.

Of the agencies which cause man to become *thoughtful*, *reflective*, and hence, speculative, we mention the following:

(a) Work.

(b) The Arts.

- (c) War.
- (d) Mutual Aid.
- (e) Family Life.
- (f) Initiation Ceremonials, Sacrifice, et cetera.
- (g) The Behavior of Refractory Members of the Group.

We shall indicate in a summary manner the influence of these various agencies in the development to a higher level of behavior.<sup>1</sup>

(a) *Work*, by which we mean action for some end outside of the process itself, involves an alertness not only of the body but of the mind; it quickens perception and makes for foresight; it accustoms one to control the immediate demands for a remoter good in the future; it develops continuity of purpose, the ability to hold to a single line of interest, and to what is greatest of all, the formulation of plans for accomplishing tasks with the greatest ease. Like thinking, which is done only when man fails by other methods of acting, work is done usually when no other way will bring results. The result is that plans for gaining ends, of meeting needs, and satisfying desires are devised involving as little work as possible, and yet bringing the greatest returns. The division of labor which at first was based upon differences between the sexes, which we have discussed in an earlier chapter, later became extended to different classes and castes, and still later to the highly specialized type of labor that goes on in our modern life. This specialization together with inventions and devices along so many lines, have as their purpose the saving of work with an increase of product. The bare fact that man was forced to *earn* or *win* his living rather than to *catch* it, that he was

<sup>1</sup>For more extended treatment see references at the end of the chapter.



forced to become an agriculturist and a herder rather than a hunter and a fisher, so sharpened his wits that he has *planned, thought out*, means of satisfying his needs with the least effort; and the greatest thing of all is that *work helped to teach him to think*.

(b) *The Arts*. The essential feature about the arts is that they provide some embodiment for form or order. They are the *tangible* ideas of man, that is, they are the outward expression of the idea. In order to express clearly the idea it must be definite and in this sharpening and defining the idea so that it can be expressed in song, the dance, in pottery, in weaving, or in music, lies the chief value of art as a factor in man's intellectual development. Order, form, balance, equilibrium, symmetry—all are brought to consciousness and are made parts of the environment of the social group by becoming objective in music and in the other arts. Certain occasions and activities of primitive man called for art. For example, war calls for "fore-dancer" who leads out the fighting line and who performs in pantomime all the motions of the fight. "The deeds of the great hunters are remembered in songs and pantomimes." The movements of the hunter as well as of the animal hunted are reproduced. All of these facts make for a clearing up of ideas, they make for thinking, for reflection, and philosophy is just a serious kind of reflection.

(c) *War*. This is one of the chief means of sharpening ideas and issues. Among the lowest savage peoples intellectual progress hinges about methods of warfare and efficiency, but at a higher level of advancement aims, ideals, and issues become clearly defined and set off. The conflict develops keenness of perception, agility of body and mind, aptitude in solving problems immediately, patience, perseverance, and initiative. It tends also to render man social

by emphasizing the need of team work, of subordination to leaders and loyalty to his group. A powerful result of war from the intellectual standpoint is the clash in methods of action between the conquered and the conquerors. "Conquered Greece her conquerors conquered" is an old statement that illustrates the point here. The ideas of the conquerors are always enriched by those of the defeated foe, a richer vocabulary results, and the novelties in handwork, music and other forms of intellectual and emotional responses become incorporated in the life of the conquerors.

The social results of war are numerous and highly significant, especially in view of the fact that the social life and organization of a people marks a starting point for their theoretical speculations and at the same time determines the limits within which speculation can take place. War develops group sentiment, group cohesion, and group loyalty. It is probable that feudalism had its origin from the fact that "a little society compactly united under a feudal lord was greatly stronger for defense or attack than any body of kinsmen or co-villagers and than any assembly of voluntary confederates." The Hebrews, after they had settled in Canaan, seemed fated to disintegrate into local communities, but were welded into one nation by wars. The Greek confederacies resulted from the Persian wars; and the New England colonies became united as a result of the activities of King Philip.

(d) *Mutual Aid*. This agency is primarily social and has been employed as the foundation of all social life. It implies a common purpose which forms a controlling rule of action. Mutual Aid or "association was the chief cause in the development of intelligence."<sup>2</sup> Language, imitation, and social experience are the offshoots of mutual aid, and

<sup>2</sup> Chapin, *Social Evolution*, p. 104.

it is agreed generally that language is an essential to any thinking whatever. Thus as language is enriched by the coalescing of peoples, and as social life becomes more and more integrated, the intellectual aspects of life become quickened, sharpened, and better defined.

(e) *Family Life*. "Family life needed more permanence than sex attraction could provide, and before the powerful sanctions of religion, society, and morals were sufficient to secure permanence, it is probable that the property interest of the husband was largely effective in building up a family life requiring fidelity to the marriage relation on the part of the wife." <sup>3</sup>

Parental care is one of the chief incentives to industry, one of the great sources in the development of thoughtfulness, foresight, prudence and judgment. The care of the young, based on the instincts heretofore discussed, leads to all theories of education, from the crudest savage initiation ceremonials to the most elaborate philosophy of education. The conflict brought about by having children which interfere with the customary modes of adult behavior brings to the foreground the question as to methods of rendering them socially fit individuals. The answer to this question has provoked as much discussion in the history of the race as any other that has ever confronted man, and the solutions have varied from time to time and from condition to condition, moving from the extremes of exposure and early death to elaborate educational and social advantages. It is difficult to think of any other problem which has brought so forcibly to man's attention the meaning and value of life; or which has been a greater stimulus to industry, and to the development of sympathy; or to the quickening of the in-

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, Dewey and Tufts, p. 47.



tellectual activities for meeting the demands which the child imposes.

(f) *Initiation Ceremonials and Other Group Customs.* The chief value of these from the intellectual standpoint is that they bring to consciousness the group ideals. In general, as is well known, group life is a life of custom. There are occasions which bring these customs to the focus of consciousness, they become *selected*, are *attended to*. The youth when initiated into the mysteries of the group is made acquainted with the funded experience of that group, of those ideals and purposes which the group deems essential to its survival. Rigid as is custom it is modified by the council of old men and the leaders in order to meet the contingencies not originally contemplated by it. The ceremonial brings to consciousness that there are features of it which may not apply to conditions as they appear at a more recent time, and the result is that such a custom is consciously amended and enlarged here and abridged there, but all the time as rigid an adherence as is possible is given to the old. The following of custom among primitive tribes can be understood best by an example from our own life. Theoretically the constitution of the United States is our fundamental law, but the interpretations which have been placed upon it by our courts, often conflicting, would doubtless not be recognized by the original framers. So many novel situations have arisen since its adoption, situations, moreover, which its framers could never have contemplated, that it is often with greatest difficulty that we recognize the original intent at all. It serves, however, as a principle of action just as do the rituals, but the ways of interpreting and acting depend upon the conditions and circumstances of the immediate present, that is, upon the conflicts which demand

adjustment. Man of any time and place always reads into the intent of his customs or constitutions his own needs, purposes, desires, and interests; and these conflicts of the present with the past are a valuable means to revision and progress.

(g) *The Behavior of Refractory Members of the Group.* In general, society both primitive and modern, frowns on any radical deviation from the customary modes of doing things. It requires time and much effort to get a habit instituted, and it is with reluctance that society breaks with an old method of solving its problems, whether that method prevails in religion, science, education, philosophy, or what not. But there always have been those who have not been satisfied to accept things as merely given, "handed out" by some authority, whether that authority be the deity, the king, chief, state, school, instructor, or parent. This break with the accepted methods of action varies in degree from the social outcast and the hardened criminal to the critic of the social institutions, and doubters in philosophy, religion, and science. *Some form of doubt* is essential to any progress whatever; some form of breaking with the established methods of behavior is essential in order to bring to consciousness the fact that the custom actually prevails; and when the break occurs each side must of necessity state its case.

The whole history of progress might be written under this topic provided we treat a refractory member of society in the manner we have suggested—as one who breaks in some manner with the customary method of doing things. Such a history would be an account of the methods by which a *member of a group*, who possesses the instincts which we have discussed, *becomes an individual*; or more generally, how a group becomes *conscious, reflective*, and consequently,

*hypothetical in methods of problem solving, and experimental as to its social customs.* We should see that the breaks or collisions group themselves about the interests of the group as opposed to those of the individual; and the conflict, between habit and reflection, between custom and progress. The interests relating to the former would be those more elemental demands which we have considered under food getting or economic activities, and the racial or reproductive interests of life. Those interests relating to the latter, while they grow out of the former, represent the more intellectual aspects of progress, such as we find in the development of law, religion, science, and philosophy.

We should find that an agricultural or commercial life emphasized individual initiative, thrift, personal sagacity, and cunning. As Maine<sup>4</sup> states the case of the joint families of the South Slavonians, "The adventurous and energetic member of the brotherhood is always rebelling against its natural communism. He goes abroad and makes his fortune and as strenuously resists the demands of his relatives to bring it into the common account, or perhaps he thinks his share of the common stock would be more profitably employed by him as capital in a mercantile adventure. In either case he becomes a dissatisfied member or a declared enemy of the brotherhood." As man becomes able to get on by himself he forgets both the Unseen Powers and his group, but the latter does not forget the individual but calls him to strict account, causing the clash and the resultant statement of the issues involved.

The history of the development of law and justice is a history of the struggle between the interests of the refractory member and those of the group. The purpose of law

<sup>4</sup>Maine, *Early Laws and Customs*, p. 264. Quoted by Dewey and Tufts, *opus cited*, p. 60.



is to make for uniformity of action, and he who steps too far aside from this expression of the public conscience, is an enemy of the group. From Hammurabi and Moses to our own day the problem has been to restrain the individual, to hold him in line. If there is a commandment against covetousness it is because this is against the interests of the group as a whole; if there is a statute prohibiting the issuance of "watered stock" it is because the interests of the individual must be subordinated to those of society. Thus the constant clash between the individual or groups of individuals and society as a whole affords the setting for a clearing up of ideas, for defining interests, aims, purposes, and for the effecting of harmonious relations between conflicting parties.

Religion, too, has had its refractory members. The early history of the Christian religion is a history of compromises of conflicting elements in the air at the time of its inception—Greek philosophy, oriental mysticism, Jewish religion, and primitive Christianity. The establishing of church dogmas served the same general purposes in religious life as the founding of constitutions, commandments, and laws in political life, namely, to mark off the limits within which the individual could live and operate. The recalcitrant member made it obligatory upon the institution clearly to state its premises and the conclusions flowing from them.

Science, philosophy, and all the interests of man, have had their Thomases who have served to bring into the lime light of consciousness the oppositions to prevailing methods and theories, who stimulate to reflective activity, and consequently to reconstruction. As all life is quickened by the doubter and critic, so it is made richer and fuller by the man who stands a little above his fellows in the ability to analyze

and invent. While the history of progress can not be written about the lives of a few great men, it is worth while to keep in mind that the great men in history are the pace setters of the race, that they set high marks to be reached, which, if not attained by many of us, spur us on to greater diligence and perseverance. It may be true that the great man seizes upon what all dimly perceive and throws this into simple statements, into tangible form, so that, when it is beheld by the many they immediately acquiesce in it and assert that they have always held the same opinion, believed the same thought, or had in mind the same principle.

These various agencies which we have discussed are, of course, not the only ones that call forth progress, advance from custom to reflection, but they serve to illustrate the general point, namely, that advance comes about through conflict, and that conflict is an inevitable result of the play of instincts in diverse physical surroundings. After the race has become reflective there are occasions for advance and these center around devices for the saving of labor, better methods of communication, and the discovery of new principles in science and philosophy; but the agencies that we have discussed are mainly those which compel man to do any thinking whatever. We have assumed that when he begins to think, something new is going to happen, and to indicate some of the results of this process is the purpose of this work.

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## CHAPTER VI

### THE NATURE OF PRIMITIVE THOUGHT

1. **Introductory.**—Before man begins to *speculate* on the facts of his world he has an abundance of practical knowledge concerning things which come within his experience. He knows how to make weapons and houses, he has information concerning the habits of animals and the properties of plants, and he has a mass of information concerning what later comes to be physics, astronomy, mathematics, and medicine. In fact he has acquired a great deal of knowledge of the empirical variety by the method of trial and error. While this is not strictly speaking science, it is the stuff out of which science and philosophy arise, for all thinking takes its origin in the materials of sense. This empirical knowledge is, as a matter of course, connected with the life interests of the group: man needs shelter and he becomes a builder; he needs food and he devises methods in the nature of bows and arrows, traps and snares, to satisfy these demands; he needs to cross the stream and he learns to build bridges; when he takes to the sea he learns to find his course by the stars, and he names the constellations after the animals that he knows; he learns to count, to survey, to experiment, to measure, to correlate, in response to the needs which are his. And the important aspect of it all is that thinking never wholly severs its connections with these practical needs. Thinking after all is *thinging*.

Out of these concrete happenings of man's life grow his

speculative endeavors. He wants to account for things; the world is a mystery in a great many ways, governed by strange laws, it is alive, and can be accounted for on the only creative principle man knows, namely, his own ability to do things.

**2. Some Occurrences which Provoke Thinking and Speculation.**—What are some of the happenings which call for thinking and for speculation? We remember that thinking in the genuine sense of the term does not take place except when there is something to be solved, some problem to be met which can not be adjusted to on the other levels of behavior, *i.e.*, on the instinctive and habitual. With this in mind we shall ask the question thus: “What are some of the happenings in the life of early man that call for explanations, that can not be adjusted to habitually?” What are some of the *unusual* things? The usual things do not call for explanation—the very fact that they are usual, ordinary, customary, is explanation enough. It is a mark of a decidedly higher intellect to take cognizance of the *common* things. For example, it took a Newton to connect the common, ordinary happening of an apple falling to the ground with the falling of the moon towards the earth. But then, a break does come in the habitual, and it is at this point that man begins to wonder. His attention is arrested, and this means that the matter in question becomes the object of reflection; and it is that set of facts most striking which first becomes the subject matter for the sharpening of man’s wits.

(a) *Birth, Death, and Sickness.* These are facts which arrest attention and which, therefore, furnish material for the operation of the cognitive processes. Among almost if not all peoples we see ceremonials connected with these facts, as the rites of purification among the Hebrews, or the burial

customs among the American Indians. Death, especially, has a profound effect on primitive man and on civilized man as well. The moment a man dies the impulse of the primitive man is to leave him and run. The pallor of death, the cessation of action, of breathing, and the cold clammy feel of the dead body strike terror to the mind of the nature man. He must think of death as the sudden departure from the body of that which brought life—a fact which functioned in the origin of the soul idea.

Sickness interferes with the routine of the day, it calls to attention the interrupted habits, heightens by contrast their value, and leads to speculation concerning its causes. It is generally thought to be due to the presence of demons or devils, and when these are cast out by the machinations of the medicine man the patient returns to normal life activities. As one does not fully appreciate liberty and its blessings until one has undergone some type of confinement, and as one does not meditate on it until it is jeopardized, so does one not appreciate the benefits and pleasures of being well nor does he speculate on the causes of disorders and their remedies until he has faced the problem. The old adage, "We never miss the water till the well goes dry," illustrates the value of the problem in provoking to thought and speculation.

Sickness, birth, and death figure in situations which lead, in part, to the origin and growth of magic, belief in demons, spirits, and souls; to negative magic, the medicine man, and later to more elaborate soul theories which function even in present day thinking, to myths concerning the origin and destiny of man, and to the profession of the priest, physician, and minister.

(b) *Unusual Occurrences in Nature*, such as eclipses, thunder and lightning, floods, and comets are of interest to



primitive man. Eclipses have always been a subject of much mystery and superstition among men, and many stories are invented to account for them. In central Africa, in Australia, and in America, the belief prevails that in an eclipse of the sun it is swallowed by a dark spirit; the changes of the moon are connected with the gods, not only in the mythologies of those mentioned above, but in most mythologies, as the Greek, Roman, and Teutonic. The superstitions connected with comets is well known for even within the memory of all are the weird stories of Halley's comet fresh and amusing.

(c) *Seasons.* The connection of the seasons with seed time and harvest has made them the subject of myth and ceremonial the world over. Among the Egyptians, and Babylonians, and other peoples of western Asia the chief ceremonials were vegetation ceremonials which occurred at stated seasons. In the east the ceremonials were held at the time of the solstices, and the prevalence throughout the eastern world of ceremonials connected with vegetation has led some to conclude that these represent the earliest deity ceremonials.

"The idea of changing seasons, of summer and winter, of the budding and withering of grain, are naturally associated with life and death." Winter, bleak, cold, horrible, resembles death; spring, joyous, gladsome, buoyant, represents life; and "as lifeless nature is again resuscitated in the spring, so will the soul awaken to a bright and joyous existence in the future."

(d) *Other Occurrences.* We shall not stop to mention the numerous occasions for myth in primitive life, for the above will indicate the point we wish to impress, that thinking comes out of the unusual, the non-customary. Everything about which myths have been made are just such oc-

currences—and they are many. They have all occasioned what we are characterizing as speculative thinking, certainly of a low order especially in the cruder myths, but increasing as the myth becomes more refined.

The facts of day and night, the changes in the position of the stars, the origin of cultural institutions such as the family, the city, the state, language, and religion; the origin of the world, of man, of evil and sin—all this and more, primitive man has incorporated in his speculations.

**3. Speculation Growing Out of These Occurrences.**—To account for the phenomena just considered gives origin to speculative thinking. The facts are to be explained, and man, possessed of the instinct of curiosity, offers various hypotheses to take care of the facts. To state the question more clearly, Given the above facts, what explanation will satisfy the instinct of curiosity? Almost any tale will do it for primitive man does not employ many checks and balances in his thinking. But he wants to know how things got started, what brings about day and night, what is back of the many facts that strike his attention. The answers to such questions constitute primitive thought—the philosophy and science of the early man. The same phenomena are also present with us and set our problems, and it may be that the answers we return will appear “primitive” to a later generation.

We shall discuss primitive thought under three general headings: (a) Magic, (b) Totemism or Animism, (c) Myth.

These categories are not exclusive, but they represent stages, attitudes, or points of view towards the phenomena of nature. We can best understand these attitudes if we say that magic represents what we are accustomed to speak of as the world viewed from the scientific standpoint; animism as the religious view of the world; and myth as the meta-

physical standpoint for the regarding of the same problems. We know that science, religion, and metaphysics are by no means exclusive, but that their fields overlap—all are dealing with the same phenomena with different interests at stake. So is it with magic, animism, and myth—they are different though related methods of giving some type of explanation to the facts which arrest man's attention.

(a) *Magic.* We may think of magic as devices for the control of nature in the interests of the group, and, at a later stage in its history, for the interests of the individual who practices it. Nature is alive with a mysterious force or power which can be controlled if the proper means are employed. The medicine man and the witch are persons who have connections with the mysterious power, and are able to bring happiness or ruin. By contact with the thing or power the worshipper secured for himself and the group that which made him strong and mighty in battle, fleet of foot, cunning, sagacious, a mighty man of valor in the interests of group life. Courage, prudence, cunning, swiftness, strength, in fact all the "virtues" could be had by eating of the flesh or drinking of the blood of such animals as possessed the "force." If a lean woman is to become fat this desired result may be brought about, according to the Australian belief, by the simple process of procuring a fat, young opossum and giving it to the woman to eat.

The performance of magical rites often involved an elaborate technique. Spencer and Gillen's elaborate studies of the Australian tribes convince one that should the same technique be developed along what we are pleased to call scientific lines the results for science would be remarkable. It is, indeed, from magic that our scientific and religious technique derives. "Out of the technique of magic has arisen two very different types of technique. One is the technique



of science which aims, by the use of delicate and standardized instruments of observation, measurement and calculation, such as fine balances, micrometers, microscopes, microtomes, dividing engines, statistical tables and algebraic formulas, at acquiring an accurate and economic intellectual control or shorthand formulation of the order of nature. The other is religious technique, which aims, by its symbols, rites, prayers, et cetera, at bringing into right relation with one another the human group and individual on the one hand, and the Supreme Power, who is the custodian and dispenser of the values on participation in which depend individual and social well-being, on the other hand. In brief, religious technique aims at vital, moral and spiritual control. Both these techniques have grown out of primitive magic which was primitive science and religion in one. Religion and magic became differentiated as religion came to embody more clearly and rationally the organization of human values into a coherent and socialized whole, and thus to furnish explicitly the motives and sanctions for a higher social-moral order; while magic, incapable of developing into an agency of social moralization and rational spiritualization, remained merely a technique for the satisfaction of isolated interests and irrational passions.”<sup>1</sup> We note that among the Australians a differentiation is taking place between the “layman” and the “priest” in the use of magic, a fact which is significant for among all culture peoples this differentiation has taken place, resulting in classes, vocations, and professions. Certain ceremonies may be performed by the Australian layman just as the layman in religion among us may perform certain religious rites, but those which involve more serious matters must be presided over among us by the man whose life is “dedicated to the cause,” and among

<sup>1</sup> Leighton, J. A., *The Field of Philosophy*, pp. 12-13.

them by the sorcerer and medicine man. Among the Arunta tribe of Australia a man who wishes to use any of the sacred or magical sticks, the *takula*, for example, goes away by himself to some isolated spot in the bush, "and, placing the stick or bone in the ground, crouches down over it muttering the following, or some similar curse as he does so: 'May your heart be rent asunder,' or 'May your backbone be split open and your ribs torn asunder,' or 'May your head and throat be split open!'" When he has done this he returns to the camp leaving the stick stuck in the ground, but later he brings it back near the camp and hides it. Then some evening after it has grown dark, he removes the magic stick from its hiding place, creeps quietly up until he is close enough to recognize his victim. He then stoops down, turns his back towards the camp, takes the stick in both hands, jerks it repeatedly over his shoulder, and mutters again the same curse. The magic goes from the point of the stick straight to the man, who soon sickens and dies unless his life can be saved by a medicine man who can discover and remove the evil magic. Sickness and death are thought of as the result of evil magic, of the entering into the body of the victim some of the mysterious force or power which abounds in nature; and again the technique both for the bringing of the evil magic into the body and for the removing by counter magic is often intricate and elaborate. The theory involved in sickness and death, that is, magic, is doubtless largely unconscious, as among us we are often democrats, methodists, and what not because of custom. But it is certain that at some point in the history of a people, especially among the cultural races, the acts which are performed involve reasons, theories, and hypotheses.

The practice and belief in magic involve a principle closely related to what we call the "law of causation."

Primitive man speaks of events as involving spirits, magic, mysterious forces or powers; but modern man attempts to account for the same facts on a more mechanical basis, and speaks of "the universal law of causation." When David Hume wrote so strongly against "cause," he may have had in mind such an idea of it as the primitive man possesses—something which can be *seen* to pass from one thing to another. In the progress from magic to science we see a movement which may be described as involving three stages, namely, first, that which attributes to events a mysterious force which brings them to pass—a conception which prevails not only in primitive society but also in our own. Ignorant people stand aghast at hypnotism, have great regard for "personal magnetism and will power"; wear a rabbit's foot for good luck, plant potatoes only at certain times of the moon, act on the suggestions of the fortune teller, believe in mind reading, take "magic" medicines, eat wonder-working foods, refuse to occupy room number thirteen, believe that "the whistling girl and the crowing hen, never come to a very good end," and numerous other suspicions based on that "mysterious force." The second stage is represented in that type of thinking which speaks of a Universal Law of Causation, Force, Energy, Matter, and such concepts as have had wonderful influence in scientific and philosophical discussions in recent times. In the third stage of development in which we now live and in terms of which we think today we believe that such a concept as the Universal Law of Causation is of no value in determining any particular cause but that if we speak of cause at all we should speak in the plural and not in the singular—we should talk of *causes*, the particular job in each case being to determine the conditions under which a given occurrence may be expected to repeat itself.



(b) *Animism.* The common view among primitive man is that everything seems to be alive, and that most things possess a soul. To be alive means for the primitive thinker to be able to move, to change, to have offspring, et cetera. These being the criteria of life, trees, sun, moon, stars, rivers, ocean, plants, and animals are all alive and may possess a soul; and to be alive is a sufficient explanation of all movement, motion and change. Things have a soul also, a second person, or double which can talk, walk, wear clothing and do generally what the first person is able to do. But, in addition, it possesses powers which the first person does not possess; it can go through objects which the body can not penetrate; it can move with greater rapidity; and is able to take on various shapes and forms which the body can not do. This latter ability of the soul is due to its nature, since it is less tangible, not so solid, but is like breath or air.

It is not to be understood that primitive man draws a sharp distinction between spirit and object, between soul and body, for certainly he has no clear cut idea of soul or spirit as would make it possible to draw such a distinction. It is more in keeping with sound psychology to assert that object and spirit are non-differentiated—that the object is both the object and the spirit; and that whatever strikes the attention forcibly, what interrupts a purpose or thwarts a desire is “animated.” In this simple way a world of “live” objects is built up, not only men and animals being alive, but, as Herbert Spencer has shown, plants and inorganic objects, or as Ratzel has said, “The words spirit and soul indicate generally any expression of life,” and the criteria of life is movement, change, power to thwart purpose, and to arrest attention. Things out of the ordinary, such as strange trees, peculiar stones, white buffaloes, and night

birds are all "animated." Diseases such as delirium and epilepsy (the sacred disease) are the work of spirits.

At a later stage in primitive thought there is a dualism between spirit and object, based possibly on a distinction between the normal and the abnormal, the customary mode of behavior of a thing in contrast with its usual behavior; but for primitive man there is never an absolute break between spirit and object. It is a well known fact that even among highly cultured peoples the belief in animism prevails generally. Even the scholar may kick the chair against which he accidentally stumbles, and derive great satisfaction from thus "getting even" with the perverse chair.

In one of its forms, almost too elaborate to be recognized, animism exists as the greatest achievement of an intellectual nature that man had yet made—the idealistic philosophy, the attempt to show that the particular object or fact partakes of, reflects, or participates in, the universal; the universal, moreover, which the Fijians call *Kalou*; the Melaneseans, *Mana*; the Zulus, *Inkosi*; the Omahas, *Wakandi*; the Algonquins, *Manitou*.

Thus primitive man accounts for his world, if we may call it an explanation, on the principle that it is alive and has a soul. To be alive means that to go further into details is useless—that is sufficient; just as it was useless to inquire further as to why a stone falls to the earth when it was explained that "that is its nature"; or why water rises in a tube when the fact was accounted for on the theory that "nature abhors a vacuum"; or why opium makes one go to sleep when the theory was, and the explanation as well, that "it possesses dormant powers"; or how the earth is held in place when it is evident that a man has it on his shoulders. The latter explanation was carried a step further, however, under the inquisitive and critical questioning of the nature

man who had his scruples as to what the man who held up the earth stood on, but his curiosity was satisfied when it was explained that the man stood on the back of a large turtle.

Certain of the most striking of spirit-objects become the centers about which ceremonials group themselves; and these are the life interests of the group. As the striking occurrences give origin to spirits so are these spirits in turn appealed to, propitiated, charmed, worshipped, sacrificed to, and bribed. Thus social life expressed in ceremonial, religion, magic, myth, and in what later become science, art and philosophy, is centered about those facts that arrest attention; and the facts that arrest attention are the central life interests of the group, those factors essential to group survival.

(c) *Myth*, which involves both animism and magic, is more directly concerned with explanation. It appears as a higher stage of thinking, and is most closely associated with our science and philosophy. We do not want to be understood as saying that animism, magic, and myth have ceased to exist in present day thinking for such is by no means the case; but there was a time when these methods were characteristic, accepted, prevalent. At a lower stage of myth making we see the crudest attempts at accounting for things, attempts which, quite probably, involve the minimum of conscious reflection.<sup>2</sup> For example, among the Algonquin Indians the words for *dawn* and *giant rabbit* were similar. The myth of the origin of light, consequently, centers about the giant rabbit. Myth formation growing out of the similarities between words is common and has been considered fundamental in the origin of all myths.

Such a foundation for myths involves the minimum of

<sup>2</sup> Wundt, *Elements of Folk Psychology*, p. 414.



conscious reflection, being a simple case of analogy; but the great mythologies of ancient peoples are more directly conscious, and, in fact, are hypotheses invented to account for the facts of experience; but "primitive myth accepts the world as given. The origin of the world order as a whole still lies beyond its field of inquiry."

In addition to the nature and purpose of myth as presented and stated above—that which emphasizes the influence of language—it is worth while to state briefly characteristic opinions of those who have given the question careful consideration. Spencer believes myth to be distorted stories of remote ancestors; Frazer regards them as attempts to explain the facts which arrested man's attention—the facts of nature and the origin of man; Wundt believes that myth includes science and religion, that it regulated private and public life. We suggest that primitive myth perhaps arose unconsciously due to striking events in man's experience, that man did not consciously set out to explain events and phenomena, but expressed the first theory that the facts suggested; for it is a psychological fact that anything that arrests attention *suggests* something that is not present, *points to* a possible solution, or course of action, and *indicates* a method of interpretation which, in this case, is the myth. But at a later period, the myth is actually a conscious attempt to give an explanation of the facts of experience.

Myths center about three important facts of man's experience, namely, the world he lives in, man himself, especially his origin and destiny, and finally, the origin of culture of social life. The first type of myth we call the cosmogonic; the second, anthropogenic; and the third, myths of heroes.

Of cosmogonic myths we are possibly best acquainted

with those of the Hebrews. The simple though direct statement is made that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Among other peoples the explanation is based on the creative powers of man and woman—the phenomena of nature being the result of a male and a female principle. This method of interpretation is based on the psychological facts involved in the perception of an object, namely, that a thing is always perceived in terms of the experience of the percipient. Those explanations based on the activity of two principles such as Love and Hate, Light and Darkness, are reflections from the notion of the origin of things through the sexes.

Two conceptions occupy a prominent place in the cosmogonies of cultural peoples. The first is that the creation of the world was preceded by *chaos*, a terrifying abyss in Greek mythology or a world-sea encompassing the earth as in the Babylonian statement of creation. Terrible demons exist in chaos and are, in Greek mythology, the children of chaos. The other conception present in creation myths of cultural peoples are the accounts of the battles of the gods. Here are pictured giant struggles between good gods and evil ones, the former finally winning out, and bringing order out of chaos. The evil gods are cast out but are not wholly crushed, and generally remain as the source of evil. Thus, the devil, a fallen angel, "Satan than whom none higher sat was once an angel of light," but now he goes about "as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour."

The anthropogenic myths are found among all peoples. They vary according to the culture of the people who possess them, but all give some kind of explanation of the origin of man, and venture theories as to his destiny. Spencer and Gillen<sup>3</sup> say that all the Northern Tribes of Central

<sup>3</sup> Opus cited, pp. 494 ff.

Australia have explanations of the creation. These explanations, as a matter of course, are crude but they answer the demands of the nature man. The living men came from individuals who lived in the "Alcheringa," the far past, and the ancestors possessed powers superior to any of the present members of the group. But if a native is asked, "Where did the men of the Alcheringa come from?" he will laugh at the absurdity of such a question, as many among us would do if asked, "Where did God come from?" These tribes believe that all people, good and bad alike, for they have no idea of a future life of happiness or misery based on good or evil conduct, return to the spot formerly occupied in the Alcheringa, and that they may again undergo re-incarnation.

The Hebrew statement of man's creation is familiar to all—he was created in the image of God, and there was breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Woman was created from a part of the body of man, a statement which is suggestive as illustrating the social position of woman at this period of Hebrew history. But how man comes into the world and where he goes at death, *i.e.*, birth and death problems, have always furnished a fertile topic for the imagination of man.

The culture and hero myths have to do with accounting for the facts of social life and organization, for example, the origin of the state, the city, of language, of number, et cetera. The hero is not merely the "heroic" hero, but is also the hero that figures in the spiritual and social realm, as the founder of society, the originator of religion, or the giver of some valuable art. Past social achievements are regarded as the deeds of great heroes, and in some cases, of the gods themselves. The hero is usually an ideal created in the image of man and reflects in a heightened degree the



ideals, aspirations, and virtues of a people. Hero myths must necessarily come late in the development of a people. It is not until much has been accomplished that the mind attempts to account for it. Social and political life, that is, must be a factor in experience before they can be the subject matter of myth. There must have existed a differentiation of vocations, family life, a legal system, religion, the arts, and all the complexities even of primitive society, in order to give the myth of this type a footing. And the method of explaining these facts give origin to what we call the hero saga.

Myth, as is evident, deals with the facts in the experience of the people who project them; and the similarity of myth is due to the similarity in the problems which different peoples have had to meet. Common problems lead to common solutions, varying according to the local conditions surrounding them. Science and philosophy are but more thoughtful ways of attempting to solve the same problems. Out of magic has grown the technique by which we control the conditions in testing our "myths," or hypotheses. Primitive man has no methods of control and his theories are limited only by the fertility of his imagination. Primitive man controls *mana* by sacrifices and by mysterious ceremonies; modern man, by determining experimentally the relation between facts, and acting in accordance with the results of such research.

**4. Some Characteristics of Primitive Thinking.**—There are certain liabilities to error which we should examine briefly. We have suggested that primitive thinking has no methods of control and where this is the case the possibilities for error are greatly increased.

There is a method in primitive thought which we employ but we are more careful in its use. This is the method of

analogy—something is like something else, therefore the two are related. Such a conception or method leads to associations of the kind we mentioned in our treatment of myth, such, for example as the relation between the giant rabbit and dawn; or to the conclusion that whatever moves has life and a soul, and is moved by purposes and desires similar to those of man.

Early tradition tells us of an organization of society on the basis of the number twelve,<sup>4</sup> a mode of organization originating probably among the Babylonians, and regarded by them as sacred, since the heavens displayed twelve "signs." Since this was a divine number, it was believed that a state organized into twelve parts or departments would also share in sacredness or the magic of the divine powers. "To the Babylonian, the sky furnished a revelation of the laws that should govern terrestrial life." The sacredness of the number twelve is expressed in the twelve legendary tribes of Israel; in the twelve gods of Greece; and in the twelve Apostles. It is also seen in Greek society which was originally composed of twelve divisions, there being four clans, each of which was composed of three phratries.

Another aspect of analogical reasoning is that which projects the prevailing social organization into the speculative thinking of a people. Mention was made earlier of the fact that those who live under a monarchical form of government project this form of organization into their religious speculations, forming a heaven after the fashion of their political society. One of the best examples of this is seen in the religious conceptions which prevail among us to this very day. Our religious ideas are to a great extent taken over from the political organization which was current when Christianity was getting its footing. Christ is *king* and *lord*

<sup>4</sup> Wundt, *Opus cit.*, pp. 304 ff.

of all. "Christ our *royal* master leads against the foe," and the many examples which will occur to any one who runs over the church hymns or thinks over the various ceremonials of the churches, will convince one that our religious life borrows its content largely from monarchy and seldom if ever makes a place for a type of social and political life which prevails among us today, that is, democracy. "Europe was organized through feudalism and the supremacy of the pope like a vast ladder reaching from the pope to the serf; and correspondingly the world was conceived as a similar ladder reaching from God through the angels and the church down to man and to nature below man."

Primitive thinking is prone to commit the fallacy known in logic as "post hoc, ergo propter hoc"—because something comes before something else, the former is the cause of the latter; or because something comes immediately after something else, the former is the effect of the latter. A great deal of "knowledge" has been accumulated in this way. Our common superstitions are generally the result of this fallacy, going all the way from bad luck which follows upon the breaking of a mirror to the dire effects of planting potatoes in the wrong time of the moon—these and the numerous others are due, as Mill says, to the "propensity to generalize."

Bacon spoke wisely of the fallacies in reasoning which are common among highly civilized man. He called them "Idols"—the Idol of the Tribe, or the tendency to neglect negative instances, *e. g.*, the failure to take account of the cases in which bad luck did not come to one who broke a mirror; the Idols of the Cave, the tendency to view things in the light of our own interests, or to use Bacon's words, "the understanding of men resembles not a dry light, but admits of some tincture of the passions and will"; and the



Idols of the Theatre, errors into which one may be led by the spirit of the times. These are fallacies to which, in addition to those which we have mentioned, man is susceptible.

And if highly cultured men are subject to these fallacies, how much more so must be primitive man!

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## CHAPTER VII

### ORIGIN OF THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY

1. **Introductory.**—The problems of science and philosophy arise at the point at which man substitutes for supernatural causes and forces, natural ones; at the point at which he begins to attribute change, and the various phenomena accounted for by primitive man on the ground of myth, magic, and animism, to causes which can be more easily submitted to verification. Primitive thought lacks one essential that we attribute to philosophy, namely, the conscious attempt to interpret *all* the facts of experience in terms of some principle. The universe for philosophy must be an *ordered* universe, one which displays a principle. Thus philosophy attempts to construct a consistent world view which satisfies the demands of the head and which provides a place for the longings of the heart. And, as we shall see later, the conflict between the “head” and the “heart” has been the bitterest one in all philosophy.

Primitive man did much thinking as is evident from the great mythologies, but his speculation was uncontrolled; he had no means of weighing, measuring, balancing, and he constructed his theories more to please and satisfy the fancy than to satisfy a deep and lasting intellectual demand. When what we are pleased to call philosophy arose among the Greeks, they, too, possessed no methods of controlling their thinking; but they made the great step men-

tioned above, namely, that of attempting to account for facts in terms of *natural principles*. This is one of the reasons why Greece has been called "that point of light in history"; and so thoroughly did they map out the course of philosophy that the poet Shelley says, "We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our art, have their roots in Greece"; or as Sir Henry Maine says, "Except the blind forces of nature, there is nothing that *moves* in the world today that is not Greek in origin."

We can, consequently, give a good deal of attention to Greek speculation and to the conditions out of which it arose for it is true that Greek thinkers have set the problems of philosophy, and have largely determined the terminology we employ.

**2. Conditions Which Led to the Origin of Philosophy.—**We have now to inquire into the specific agencies which were operative in Greece for the bringing to the front of problems of science and philosophy. We have considered various agencies which make for reflective thinking, and our purpose is now to acquaint ourselves with the *specific* agencies in Greek life which figured in making universal the judgment that Greece is the cradle of philosophy. Things do not just happen, they do not merely grow, but there are always conditions present which favor or hinder development. We do not attempt to tell *why* corn grows, yet we know it does, but we can state conditions which make for a healthy crop; neither do we attempt to state *why* man grows, *why* he develops from savagery to civilization, and *why* he thinks one state of society better than another, but we can state conditions which favor or retard development. We can state that progress comes about through conflict, but we are not attempting to state why it is better to win in the conflict



than to lose, why it is better to make progress than to stand still. If one wants to believe the latter, there is apparently no way of convincing him to the contrary.

(a) *Physical Factors:*

(1) Greece is a peninsula, and the sea is easy of access, a sea, moreover, which is full of islands.

(2) Greece has a temperate climate, much more so than the river valleys of Asia.

(3) Greece is broken into a great number of small districts, making it possible for different peoples to develop more or less different ideals.

(4) The Mediterranean made it possible for the Greeks to develop without serious interference on the part of the Asiatics for it was impossible to transport large armies.

(5) Greece faced the civilized east—there are but three or four harbors on the west coast.

(6) The landscape of Greece is upon a moderate scale—no great mountains, no desolate deserts. Nature in Greece is not terrible.

Let us inquire into some of the results of such a physical environment. The fact that the sea is easy of access and that it abounds in islands made it possible for the Greeks to find means of expression of the instinct of curiosity, and for the growth of trade and commerce. A tendency in man which finds an adequate means of expressing itself in action tends to be "stamped in," as the comparative psychologists say. Thus fortified, made strong by use, the instinct, when other stimuli are presented, is expressed with added vigor. Moreover, the instinct itself is made more sensitive to stimuli, the limen is lowered, so that a stimulus which would fail to excite the organism under other conditions will meet with a response such that great results are achieved in different fields of interest.

The possibilities of a commercial life are a wonderful incentive to growth. The activities essential to a successful commercial career are such as to develop keenness and alertness, and a well-wrought program of action; but the influence of such a career in rubbing off the rough edges of isolation and backwardness are too well known to demand comment.

A temperate climate demands work, and man owes more to the fact that he has had to work than is generally recognized. The natural products of Greece were greater than those of the Asiatic countries. This led to greater variety in occupations, and we have suggested in another connection the importance of occupations in shaping the type of mental life of a people or class. Men form the habit of industry as they form other habits, and the conditions for habit formation must always be present. Once the habit of industry is formed through work made necessary by the very conditions of a country, this attitude or habit is readily brought to bear on other situations, for example, the intellectual activities of man. The industrious nation commercially may perhaps become the industrious nation intellectually.

The natural features of Greece divide it into many distinct parts—about twenty in all. The natural barriers prevented one portion from absorbing the other, although they were not so powerful as to prevent intercourse and rivalry in various lines of interest. The diversity of products of the sections of Greece made for intercourse and hence the breaking down of the tendency to become conservative and superstitious due to isolation. The mountain slopes in Attica grew grapes and olives so that the Atticans could well become the providers of these commodities to others who could not produce them. On the other hand, Attica could not produce grain. This fact led to trade, to the

bringing home of new ideas and customs, to the breakdown of that conservatism that prevails in a purely agricultural nation, and to the sharpening of the instinct of curiosity, for the seafaring Greeks "were always seeking some new thing."

Persia was able to subdue the Asiatic Greeks almost without a blow but she failed to conquer the European Greeks even by supreme effort. The Mediterranean made it possible for the Greeks to develop independent of Asiatic interference, although the Greeks were able to gain the best elements of Asiatic culture, due to commerce. Where the same environmental factors as are found in Greece were present in other parts, as in west Syria or parts of Asia Minor, civilization began with the same characteristics as we find in Greece; but in the countries mentioned the river empires impressed their culture on that of western Syria and Asia Minor. While the Mediterranean made travel less difficult, resulting in the mixing of peoples, that essential to progress, it at the same time prevented the imposition by force of Asiatic culture on the Greek districts.

The fact that Greece faced the east made it possible for her to carry on her traffic with the eastern countries and prevented entrance by the barbarians on the west coast. On the side towards Italy, Greece is a coast of cliff and marsh, with but a few good harbors. There was that security from invasion from both directions—from the east and from the west—due to the beneficence of nature; so that the Greek genius was able to find other means of expression.

Greek landscape is moderate—no great deserts to produce the effect of monotony and homogeneity, no great mountains to awe the mind, no terrible earthquakes to strike



terror to the imagination, and no destructive floods to appall the mind, and to discourage a sea-faring life. We remember that it has been suggested that monotheism tends to prevail in desert countries, and that the mind is overawed by the phenomena of nature in others, so that no attempt is made to explain or to understand, but that man, in mute submission, bows before them. His attitude is one of prayer, faith, mysticism; but when nature is less compelling the mind of man seeks explanations. "Oriental despotism gives way to Greek freedom, Oriental submission to tradition, and custom was replaced by fearless inquiry and originality." Moderation and variety in natural phenomena must be influential in shaping the many sided genius of a people. The Greeks developed a love for harmony and proportion; moderation became the ideal of virtue; temperance and the mean figure constantly in their ethics; and they employ the same word for good and beautiful.

(b) *Social Factors.* The Greeks are no longer considered a "young" people. Before the remarkable researches which began about 1870, the chief of which has been since 1900, it was the custom to stand in amazement at the rapidity of the rise of Greek civilization. We have since learned, however, that "obscure millenniums preceded the sudden bloom."

The "Ægean civilization" spread along the coasts and islands of the Mediterranean at various points from Cyprus to Sardinia. This is the civilization of the slender, short, dark skinned people of southern Europe, and dates from about 3500 B. C. to 1200 B. C. This culture was not borrowed but was native. Steady progress appears from rough stone implements and rude carvings up to magnificent bronze work and highly developed art. This civilization,

especially that in Crete, was destroyed by a series of barbarian invasions, assisted probably by the oppressed native inhabitants.

Between 1500 and 1200 B. C., a remarkable change took place in Greece. This period marks the coming of the Homeric Greeks, the Achæans. They differ greatly from the others both physically and in social customs. Homer's Greeks are tall, fair, of yellow hair, and blue eyes. They burn their dead, worship a sun god, use iron swords, feast all night on roast oxen, and are vigorous in all warlike activities. The Achæans imposed their language and customs upon the Cretans and Myceneans, and the customs blended more readily than the races. The unit of society was the clan presided over by a clan elder. The ties which bound the clan together were kinship and worship. Clans united into tribes, the leading clan elder becoming king of the tribe and its priest. Originally a tribe dwelt in several clan villages in the valleys around some hill. On the hilltop was the common worship place. In hilly Greece many of these citadels grew near together, causing a still further welding together of the people. Separate citadels would be torn down, one large one constructed, so that a city resulted. As clans federated into tribes so did tribes federate into cities or city states.

The city had three political elements, king, council, and popular assembly—the germs of later monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. The king was leader in war, judge in peace, and priest at all times; the chiefs were the clan elders and members of the king's family; the assembly was made up of free men who had at first but little to do other than to listen to what the king and the chiefs had already planned. But even the assembly had to be *persuaded*—it could not be ordered. Homer gives an interesting picture of

a free man who even opposed the king. "Theristes, uncontrolled of speech, whose mind was full of words wherewith to strive against the chiefs—hateful was he to Achilles above all, and to Odysseus, for them he was wont to revile. But now with shrill shout he poured forth his upbraidings even upon goodly Agamemnon."

The third great period of Greek history is marked by the Dorian invasion which began about 1000 B. C. The invaders introduced the use of heavy-armed infantry, with long spears, in regular array and close ranks. They settled in the Peloponnesus, a district which had been the center of Mycenæan and Achæan glory. But both invaders and former inhabitants lost their lead in culture, and when civilization took a start in about 900 B. C., it arose in new centers—in Attica and in Asia Minor. Greek life bloomed again about 650 B. C.

An important social fact is that the Greeks came to think that all Hellenes were of one race. The forces which mainly made for the unity of feeling were language, literature, and the Olympian religion. The likeness in language made it possible for a common literature to prevail, so that Homer was sung everywhere—a fact which tended greatly towards social solidarity. The poets, moreover, invented a system of relationship which in mythological garb had much to do with uniting the people. Helen, so the poets said, had three sons, Æolus, Dorus, and Xunthus. Xunthus became the father of Achæus and Ion. Æolus, Dorus, Achæus and Ion were the ancestors of all Hellenes—the Æolians, the Dorians, the Achæans, and the Ionians.<sup>1</sup> A common language and literature, a common ancestry, and a common religion were powerful factors in giving solidity to Greek society.

Between 1000 and 500 B. C., the kings disappeared from

<sup>1</sup>Cf. with the discussion of culture myths, Ch. VI.



all except two of the Greek cities, and the government came into the hands of the nobles. The next struggle politically was that between the few and the many, between the nobles and the masses. The tyrants, whose day approximately was between 750 and 500 B. C., then arose as the champions of the many, and thus the way was paved for democracy.

Very briefly we have sketched the social conditions of the Greeks down to about 600 B. C., the time when the problems of speculative thinking began to arise. Our question now is, what is the relation between that social background and philosophy? The survey indicates that Greek civilization is old, that time enough had elapsed for characteristic traits to develop, for the environment to have become operative in the development of traits, for wars to lend their contribution as agencies of progress, for commerce to develop, for governments to be founded and overthrown. The fact that a large number of districts each with its clan elder consolidated into a city led naturally to a more liberal form of government for each clan elder who became a noble or chief would be guided somewhat by the desires and interests of his own people.

The great period of breakdown due to invasions furnished the setting for the weeding out of unsuccessful modes of action along the line of warfare and such other activities as would be engaged in by a people of varied interests as were the Greeks. One will readily notice that all through the social development the Greeks have been *independent*. They were always suspicious of authority, for even in Trojan days Theristes could "pour forth his upbraidings even upon goodly Agamemnon." Then the fact that all Hellenes came from a common ancestor created a feeling of brotherhood and democracy. Kings were overthrown, oligarchies were superseded, and the people ruled. Such freedom in

political action could not but be reflected in other types of interest, and consequently, we find the Greek thinkers attacking fearlessly any problems. The field was indeed ripe for the problems of philosophy.

**3. Greek Religion.**—Before we consider the problems of philosophy and science which arose in Greek life we shall consider briefly the religious speculations of the country which is the father of science and philosophy. It is out of a religious matrix that philosophy immediately developed. It will be recalled that there was a native population of great antiquity in Greece and in the islands about. This people had a religion of mysticism which was primarily interested in the soul. When the barbarians came from the north they brought with them their religion which was a reflection of their aggressive nature. We have, therefore, two tendencies in the religious experience of the Greeks, which have figured largely in later developments not only of Greek thought but of all thought as well. We may call these two tendencies the mystical and the intellectual. At a somewhat later period of Greek thought, and before the origin of purely scientific problems, the old folk religion, that which flourished before the coming of the barbarians, became identified with the cults of Dionysus and of Orpheus; while the religion of the invaders, accounts of which we have from the Homeric poems, became the Olympic religion.

The Orphic tendency, the religion of mystery, is primarily other-worldly. The chief interest centers about man's soul, its fall, and its return to its former celestial abode. The soul has come from afar, "trailing clouds of glory," was once pure and unsullied; but now it has a corrupt nature, and the business of man here below is to get back to the realms of the blest. The soul makes its eternal rounds, from the dead to the living, from the living to the

dead, now in man, now in a lower animal, and finally in due season it reaches the end of its journey only, it appears, to start all over again in the endless, eternal whirl of time. As Greek thought developed, the Orphic religion or tendency found expression in the Pythagorean philosophy which flourished in the west. While this philosophy in becoming scientific made valuable contributions to mathematics, astronomy, and biology it never lost interest in the mystical and religious. When we reach the great systematic philosophers we find the Orphic current running through their thinking. Especially is this true of Plato who was powerfully influenced by the Pythagoreans, and whose soul doctrine reaches far back into the ages before the arrival of the barbarians from the north with their more rationalistic religion.

The Olympic religion, on the other hand, was the forerunner of the scientific and practical aspect of Greek life and thought. This is the religion which we have learned from Homer and from the great dramatists. The Olympic tradition is well exemplified in the cosmogony of Hesiod. The Fates or possibly Fate which is beyond and superior to the gods divides the world into four great provinces: the heavens, the earth, the air, and the water, which were later to appear in Greek thought as the *four elements*, earth, air, fire and water—concepts that played the chief part in the scientific speculations of the Greeks, and which remained fundamental and elemental until the rise of the science of chemistry. As Greek thought develops from the religious to the scientific, from the supernatural to the natural, we find the Olympic current accepting atomism and materialism, entering heartily upon the things of this world, and throwing aside the idea of a God as essential in the explanation of the facts of experience.



We have touched on these two tendencies in Greek thought because they run through the whole history of philosophy. The one is the mystical, that type of thought which prevails in time of disintegration and decay—when man loses his nerve. Such a period is that which runs all the way from the decline of speculation in Greece after the death of Aristotle, through the Roman periods and the middle ages to the renaissance. In the first part of the nineteenth century the romantic, mystical tendency comes again to the front, and finds expression in the literature of Germany, France, England, and America, in political life, in religion, and philosophy.

The Olympic, the scientific, flourishes in the “golden ages,” in those periods of security and of progress when man feels himself the master of the world. Such periods were the centuries of great systems among the Greeks, of the age of discovery and invention at the beginning of the modern world, and in the centuries of the remarkable rationalistic systems of philosophy which arose with Descartes and which have reached, with some exceptions, to our own day.

The mystical tendency, originating in the cults of the early inhabitants of Greece, runs through later Greek thought, neo-Platonism, and Christianity; the scientific tendency takes its rise among the pagan Greeks, and runs through Greek science, the scientific researches of the renaissance, the political and social life of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, and finds expression in the emphasis on intelligence in our present day philosophy. The former regards man as “fallen” and helpless; the latter is buoyant and hopeful, and thinks little of sin. The former is non-theoretical, is mystical, cares little for science and research; the latter places unbounded confidence in

reason—it is the key that unlocks the universe and its mysteries if any it possesses. The former is other-worldly; the latter believes that man's job is here below.

We shall see these tendencies as they appear from time to time in the great systems of thought which it is our purpose to investigate. We shall see, for example, that idealistic types of philosophy are always other-worldly, mystical, and come forward as "defenders of the faith"; and that scientific speculation finds a congenial world where spirits and demons and inhabitants of the other world take a subordinate position if they figure at all.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY

**1. Introductory.**—We have now to inquire into the nature of the problems of philosophy. They have to deal with the same material that myth, magic, and animism deal with; but the answers which philosophy gives are different and the spirit of the undertaking is different. Philosophy is a more conscious attempt to account for the phenomena of experience, in terms of some principle or other which threads together the apparent differences into a unity. It sets to work earnestly to find principles and is patient in the search for contradictions which will not square with the principle which is constantly and consciously employed; for it is by the union of apparent contradictions in some higher and more inclusive principle that systems are constructed. The aim is to secure a harmonious view of the world so that we may know where to place things, how to evaluate them, and how to behave in their presence.

What will be the problems of any period will depend upon various factors, such as the political conditions, commercial interests, and the social life. In Greek life and thought the problem of conduct usually dominated. The question, what is good? was the center from which speculation generally set out. It is true that to attack any of the problems of philosophy is to raise them all, for every philosophical theory must account for all the facts of experience. An ethical theory involves a logical theory, a logical theory



in turn involves a theory of reality, and so on. At one time religion is of supreme interest and philosophy is viewed from that standpoint; again science may be the dominating interest, and our philosophy will be a reflection of science. We have pointed out earlier that a system of philosophy is a reflection of the life of the period in which it prospers, and that to understand the system in question we must know the conditions which gave it birth. We shall have numerous occasions to see the truth of this statement in the shifting of problems from time to time as we pass in review trends of periods in which we shall be interested. We have said also that the Greeks, especially Plato and Aristotle, set the problems of philosophy. This is true but it should be added that the aspects of the problems shift, certain ones becoming of chief interest in one period to be supplanted in another by new conditions of life.

The earlier Greek thinkers did not differentiate the problems of science and philosophy. It was all science or all philosophy as we care to call it. Indeed the process of differentiation has not been completed to this day, as is seen in the recent separation of sociology and psychology from the parent, and in the tendency to make of ethics a "scientific" discipline. Many can remember when physics was studied as "natural philosophy," and psychology and ethics as "mental and moral philosophy." This constant breaking away from philosophy of the various disciplines such as sociology and psychology has led certain cynics to remark on the interesting career of philosophy which was once everything and is now nothing—a humble, beggarly parent who has been turned out of house and home by a large family of children who have grown strong and mighty. But those who make such assertions forget the part that philosophy has played in making the remark possible at all; they

take a retrospect view and assume that what are now definite and well defined sciences were always so.

**2. The Problems raised by the early Greeks.**—Knowing what we do about the conditions in early Greece, what problems of a speculative nature should we expect to find? We have seen constant changes of a political nature, a shift from kings to nobles, to tyrants, and to the people; we have found a commercially active people who were acquainted with different ideas, customs, and practices all over the world; we have found a heterogeneous people due to different geographical conditions; a people who had a common language and who sprang from a common ancestor; and, finally, we note that their entire attention in the early stages of their experience was directed to the things of the outside world, to nature, to the material, and not to the mental or spiritual. In fact, up to this time no sharp line was drawn between mind and object or matter.

Out of such a background arose the question: Is there anything *permanent* in the universe? Is there a *common principle* that runs through all the differences that man perceives? What kind of thing is the world anyhow? This is the philosophic problem of *permanence* and *change*, one of the profoundest problems in philosophy. This is the problem of the *world* and is generally spoken of as the *cosmological* problem. Instead of the terms *permanence* and *change*, we may employ the terms *being* and *becoming*; and the problem stated in these terms would be, Is there a One, a Unity which is Being from which all differences flow?

Other problems arose in Greece as a result of constant fluctuations in political affairs. The masses and the nobility were struggling incessantly, laws were changed at every meeting of the law-making body, old ideals were constantly breaking down, customs were giving way to the will

of tyrants, and tribal conceptions of guilt and retribution were being undermined by the new feeling of the worth of the individual. The poets, especially Euripides, reflect the new ideals of skepticism and individualism as it was expressed in practical affairs in the control of the law courts and the political machinery in general by strong personalities. The times afforded ample setting for the growth of the individual against the conservative customs which had regulated the life of the people.

The Persian wars had a tendency to unite the Greeks against a common enemy but once the danger was over, Athens entered upon a period of prosperity never known before, and the old struggles became more insistent. Athens became the chief city of Greece, the centre of commercial and intellectual activity, to which came men from all parts of the country, drawn by the charm of a busy and interesting life. As always results when people of diverse interests meet, Athens became a city not of one idea but of a thousand. Custom could not long survive intact in the struggle with other customs from different parts of the world. The fact that different customs governing the same actions prevailed in other parts of the world naturally led to a criticism of prevailing Greek customs and to individualism in thought and action. When success depends upon keenness and shrewdness in driving a bargain we always find there the *individual*—he is born in just such a situation. When political life is such that the man of wealth, or the demagogue, or the warrior may gain a desirable place by the exercise of his powers, whether money, oratory, or arms, we find individuals gradually breaking from the mass to qualify themselves for what might be theirs for the taking. The political life was such, as is evident, that any one who could



perchance become an individual might take his place among the mighty.

Athens at this time was indeed a democracy—that is, a democracy for citizens for there were many slaves and non-citizens whose interests were other than governmental. Every citizen had a part to perform in the state; he was a jurymen and assemblyman, or some official of the government. Always from a fourth to a third of the citizens were in the civil service. These honors were passed around so that at one time or another in the life of a citizen he was called upon for service in some official capacity. Several offices could be held but once by the same individual, so that every citizen could count upon serving the state in almost every office. "Politics was his regular occupation; office-holding, his regular business." The poorest citizen was eligible for any office, and what is more they were paid for their services. Such a system made for a high grade of intelligence, developed individualism and self-assertion, made it possible for man to pursue interests without interruption on the part of some authority, such as church or state, and made it possible for man to *achieve* distinction rather than to *inherit* it.

A social life of this order demanded a particular type of education and a characteristic training; and such a conception of the function of the citizen led to a particular type of reflective thinking, a characteristic philosophy. That type of thinking is summarized in the doctrine of one of the foremost thinkers of his day, Protagoras, that "man is the measure of all things." This is the philosophical expression of the growing individualism in Greek life. It is quite a different problem from that we first mentioned, namely, that which was concerned with a *principle* in

nature; yet it is closely related to it. It differs in this, that the former is concerned with, and directed towards, an outside world, to the world of nature; while the latter is concerned with the world inside, the world of man. The problems, then, are the same, but are directed towards a different subject matter. We may state the latter thus: Is there a principle in man which is abiding and permanent, and which is common to all men? The conditions of the age forced the question; it grew out of them as the literature of a period grows out of it.

The cosmological problem—the problem of the universe—does not in our time interest thinkers as it did in the days of the Greeks. One reason is that the universe for the Greeks was a *little* universe—the top, the sky; the bottom, the earth. It was the universe of perception, what the ordinary man sees when he looks about him. But the universe as we know it from astronomy is a vastly different one from that of the Greeks. Consequently the cosmological problem is not prominent now; but what once went under this general name, we now consider under *Ontology* or *Being*.

**3. Classification of the Problems of Philosophy.**—We may accordingly classify the problems of philosophy on the principle of the various ways in which the two questions we have mentioned above have been answered—one, the problem of the outer world; the other, the problem of the inner world; one, matter or nature; the other, mind or soul. Both questions, we must repeat, arose necessarily from the very conditions of Greek life, and the fact that they are still questions argues for their genuineness and depth. But the answers that have been given them from time to time since the Greeks constitute the history of speculative thinking. These answers have always grown out of conditions and circumstances of the period in which the answers were

given; and it can hardly be over-exaggerated that speculative thinking is always drawn from the necessities of the time, that it is always practical, that it always shifts with the interests of the times, with the changes of social, economic, and political conditions, and, finally, that it is vain to hope to find an *eternal, fixed, and immutable* system of philosophy, and still hope for progress. A fixed system is applicable only to a dead society.

If we believe that there *is* something permanent in the world, something that remains fixed amid the changes that we constantly witness, we may believe this permanent something to be either (a) Material, or (b) Ideal, either, that is, of the nature of matter or of mind. If we believe (a) our system of philosophy will be some form of *Materialism*; if we believe (b) the system will be some form of *Idealism*. Of course it is not necessary to believe that there *is* a permanent something at all, but if it is believed, then the result will be as we have mentioned.

If we believe that there is something permanent in the universe, we may believe also that it is (c) One, or (d) Two, or (e) Many. If we believe (c) we are *Monists*; if we believe (d) we are *Dualists*; if we believe (e) we are *Pluralists*. Thus, a thinker may be a materialist and at the same time a pluralist, as was Democritus of the Greeks; or he may be a materialist, and at the same time be a monist, as was Thales, the first philosopher of the Greeks, who taught that everything comes from water, that water is the principle (and material, too) which all things in common possess and which is the abiding one at the bottom of all changes. Some combinations would be more difficult to make, although strange variations have occurred in the history of philosophy.

The above types of philosophy have arisen in answer to



the problem of the nature of the world, *i. e.*, the *cosmological*, or, what we shall call the *ontological* problem. But there was another question that worried the Greeks, as we have seen, namely, that of man, or of the *inner* world. We have spoken of this as the problem of the *Universal* and the *Particular*, as the other is that of *Permanence* and *Change*. But we should keep it in mind that they are not two different problems, but the same problem applied to different subject matter.

There are several ways in which man is the measure of all things, *provided he is the measure at all*. Socrates and Plato, the two great thinkers and teachers among the Greeks, were quick to see that the doctrine of Protagoras, the Sophist, was one of fundamental value, that its implications from a social, religious, political, ethical, and scientific standpoint were of supreme moment. Is man the measure of *truth*? This raises the problem of *logic* and *epistemology*, or of *knowledge*. Is man the measure of *right* and *good*? This, in turn, raises the problem of *politics* and *ethics*. Is man the measure of the *beautiful*? This is the problem of *æsthetics*. Thus, out of the teachings of the Sophists, that group of men who rose to meet the demands of the social life of Greece, to teach the young in the arts of persuasion so that they might "make the worse appear the better reason," came, in part, the first formulation of the interests, or points of view, or fields within which discussions of a philosophical nature would take place. Their teachings, that is to say, gave origin to the problems of logic and epistemology, ethics and politics, and æsthetics. The problem of the nature of *being*, or the *Ontological* problem arose, as we have seen, in the earlier activities of Greek life. Therefore, our problems are:

Being, Ontology, or Metaphysics;

Truth, Logic, Epistemology, or Theory of Knowledge;

Good, Ethics, or Politics (in the broad sense of social life);

Beauty, or *Æsthetics*.<sup>1</sup>

The various methods of dealing with these problems, the emphasis placed on one rather than another at any particular period, are facts, among others, that determine the type of speculative thinking which we witness from time to time in the history of philosophy. Realism, Idealism, Empiricism, Rationalism—in fact, the various *isms* which often seem confusing are just characteristic ways of dealing with these fundamental problems. Every complete system of philosophy must consider all four of these fundamental questions mentioned above. Many philosophers, however, are interested along one line only; but it is not a very serious task to arrive at a conclusion as to what his attitude would be in other fields, once we know his position in any one, so closely related are these fields.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This classification of the problems of philosophy varies somewhat from that sometimes given. For example, metaphysics is sometimes treated as involving both ontology and epistemology.

<sup>2</sup>The scheme given below is intended to guide the student in acquiring a vocabulary, and to assist in orienting him in the apparent confusion of systems. It should not be memorized but may best be employed as an aid when occasion demands. By the time the text is finished he should have learned the systems and their relations and chief characteristics.

*Scheme of Problems.* All investigations may be conducted from the three following points of view:

- A. Nature, or Reality.
- B. Knowledge.
- C. Conduct.

The fundamental or ultimate problems of each are:

Of Reality,

The Ontological, which asks, What is the nature of reality? Answers to this question lead to the following theories:

Pluralism, which may be either materialistic or spiritualistic;

Dualism, which holds to two fundamentals, mind and matter;

Materialism, which asserts that there is one principle and that it is material;

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Idealism, which also holds to one principle which is spiritual;  
 Of Knowledge,

The nature of knowledge, different answers to which give origin to

Realism, which asserts that knowledge is a copy of the object ;

Idealism, which asserts that knowledge is not a copy of the object  
 but is an inner process ;

Instrumentalism, which asserts that knowledge is an adaptive  
 process.

The origin of knowledge, different answers to which give rise to

Empiricism, which asserts that all knowledge comes from sense  
 perception, from experience ;

Rationalism, which asserts that there are principles such as the  
 axioms of mathematics which are not from experience, but are in-  
 nate, and that reason and not sense is the source of knowledge ;

Instrumentalism, which asserts that knowledge comes to be in a  
 biological process of adjustment and adaptation.

Of Conduct,<sup>3</sup>

What is the good? The answers to this give rise to

Utilitarianism, which asserts that it is conduct which brings the  
 greatest happiness ;

Intuitionism ; good is innate.

<sup>3</sup> See Dewey and Tufts' *Ethics* for elaborate classification.



## CHAPTER IX

### PLATONIC IDEALISM

**1. Introduction.**—One of the great systems of philosophy is *idealism*. It has attracted the greatest minds in the realm of philosophy and in one form or another it has been prominent from the days of Plato to our own. It attempts to give an answer to the problem of *being*, and from the nature of the answer, it offers a theory of knowledge, of ethics, of æsthetics, and of religion. The fundamental note in idealism of all kinds is the *priority of mind*. The kind of mind, whether finite or infinite, universal or particular, makes no difference in the fundamental assumption. But some kind of mind, spirit, or idea is the primal thing in the universe. After the time of Plato and until as late as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries of our era, idealism was called *realism*, meaning that ideas alone are real. So what was once realism is now idealism, and the former term is now applied to a different type of philosophy, which we shall consider later.

**2. Historical Setting of Idealism.**—The fact that the fundamental note in idealism is the priority of mind, soul, spirit, or idea, gives one at the very outset a clue to the interests idealism serves. We have spoken earlier of the two tendencies running through Greek life and thought, one, the Olympic, hard-headed, scientific, materialistic; the other, the Orphic, tender-minded, spiritualistic, religious, mystic. Even much earlier we saw that primitive man interprets his

world in terms of souls, demons, and spirits—nature is animated. Myths are spiritualistic, things come to be through the agency of gods, heroes, devils, spirits. Consequently idealism is deeply rooted in man's nature. It would not be an exaggeration to say that it is the first philosophy, for those primitive nature men who first reflected on the phenomena of experience, who first attempted to give an account of how things came to be, were idealists. They spoke in terms of spirit and demon, explained on the only creative principle they knew, namely, man's ability to accomplish results, to effect changes, to make, to construct. So we may say that from primitive times to our own day it has been the chief philosophy.

Our chief interest, however, is to show the conditions in historic times which have been conducive to the rise and prominence of idealism. In the first place, idealism has always been an ally of religion, has been the background of great systems of conduct and ways of life. God and the soul are themes of deep significance in idealistic philosophy. This we might expect from the connection of religion with the Orphic mysteries; and, after all, it is the continuation in historic times of primitive soul doctrines; it is the philosophical side, the highly conscious aspects of religion and a "way of life." Thus it is in spirit a way of living, a method by which man may again be restored to "that blissful seat." This being the case, we shall find it in historic times to be connected with periods of breakdown, when men are looking for "a rock in a weary land, and a shelter in the times of the storm," when old landmarks are being swept away by wars, inventions, and, in short, by those agencies which figure in a reconstruction of the habits of life. When the problems of life become too serious, too overwhelming, idealism ceases to be a rational philosophy and becomes mystical,

a matter of faith. Such periods have occurred at times when men, unable to comprehend the changes about them, have given up rational behavior and have yielded to the demands of the heart.

We have touched on the marvelous changes that were taking place in Greece about 400 B. C. The citizens were ruling, that is, there was democracy, and every man took his turn in political life, politics being his business. There arose a class of men, the Sophists, chief among which were Protagoras and Georgias, whose business it was to teach young men the art of speaking well in public, for this was essential to political preferment. The *orator* was the man among the Greeks at this time for such were the demands of political life. The *individual counted*. Therefore the doctrine of Protagoras that man is the measure of all things—whatever a man could “get away with” was legitimate—struck a sympathetic chord in Greek life.

The Sophists were men who had travelled extensively, knew the customs of various peoples, knew that each people had its own method of meeting problems; and this all tended to do away with the idea of the sanctity of law. When laws were changed from year to year, it is little wonder that men should not have respect for them, or not believe them divine when they knew the methods by which they were passed. It is not to be expected that their laws should be held sacred when one of their own number was selected to be the judge of them. There gradually grew up a distinction between nature and convention, between what is and what ought to be. The ordinary laws were the facts of custom and convention, but back of them were the laws of nature which were abiding.

But while laws were thought of as conventions, the serious aspect of things began to appear when the same attitude



was carried over into morality. If laws are merely *conventions*, why not morality? Are moral customs conventions, too? Yes, this is so that moral conventions are nothing but inventions of the many to restrain the few, or of rulers who wish to chain their subjects. The Sophists, of course, were not the cause of this change in attitude, but were merely the reflection of it in the intellectual life of the times. Plato asserted that the whole state had turned Sophist, due, in great part, to the rapacity and unscrupulousness which characterized the dealing of one Greek state with another. If states are "crooked" it is certain that the tendency will come out in the private life of the people. Such conditions as we have briefly stated determined the problems of Plato but the solutions he offered to them were determined largely by two great facts, namely, his social position, and the Orphic strain in Greek thought.

It was Socrates, however, who first challenged the individualistic views of the Sophists, and who was first to discern that their methods and beliefs would surely result in disaster; but it remained for his pupil, Plato, to formulate a definite philosophical theory to the contrary. The *demos* had condemned Socrates to death on the alleged grounds that he had corrupted the youth and had taught a strange religion. This rash act on the part of the people tended to make Plato more bitter towards them and their ability to manage affairs. He set about, consequently, with the definite purpose of showing that *individualism* and *change* are *philosophically unsound*. He was especially interested in the ethical theory of the Sophists and the individualists of the time, and busied himself to show that a theory to the effect that "might makes right" is disastrous to any stable form of society. Consequently, ethics is his chief interest, the *Republic* his greatest work.

**3. Problems Considered by Plato.**—Plato sought to solve certain problems which he thought to be at the bottom of the controversy between the *permanence* party and the *change* party, between the individualist and the universalist. He saw that an investigation into the nature of being was necessary if anything lasting was to be accomplished. Therefore, he inquires into the nature of that which is, believing that if there is something permanent in the universe the arguments of the Sophists would be refuted.

(a) *The Metaphysical Problem.* The permanent, immutable reality is *idea*, *form*, or *type*. We see particular things, men, for example, but they are not *the* reality, but *participate in* the reality, which is the type, *man*. *The real* is not any of the particular things of sense such as we see or hear, but it is the idea or form which *causes* the particular thing. The real is the pattern after which all particular things are made. The idea, as Plato used the term idea, is not the commonsense idea which we think of as something in the head, but is on the outside and has existence whether we know anything about it or not. There is a world of ideas, types, forms, or patterns, which exists eternally and unchangeably above and beyond the world of sense perception. This world of sense is a poor copy or imitation of the real world of ideas; the former is a world of constant flux, but the latter is eternally fixed. What the common man believes to be real, *i. e.*, the things he sees and hears, is but a poor copy of the real, a bad imitation of what is true reality. What the Sophist and the democrat believed to be real, Plato taught, is only appearance. Their arguments, therefore, are certainly faulty for no one would think of giving full attention to the copy when true reality could be found in case due diligence is given to the subject.

The ideas themselves are in a certain order, with the idea

of the Good or God at the head. Thus the Good is the chief interest of Plato. Things earthly partake of the good in varying degrees, for God desires as many things to be like Him as possible. But just what the exact order of the ideal world is can not be stated accurately, but we can, thought Plato, make out some of them and their relations. It is the business of science or knowledge to investigate this matter in order that an exact statement of the relations of the ideas themselves as well as the precise connections between ideas and earthly things may be made out. The important matter from our standpoint is that the real world is a world of ideas at the head of which is the Good or God.

It should be noticed that Plato finds a place for both permanence and change. The permanent is the idea, the changeable is the sense fact, the things of this world. He does not deny that his opponents, the democrats, the common men, the Sophists, have no case at all, but he shows that their case is concerned with something that is not *the* real. He could have denied the reality of the things of sense in every respect as others have done, but he took the much wiser course of showing how the case of his opponents could be accounted for in a higher system. Instead of showing or attempting to show that the opponent had no case at all—a hazardous undertaking—Plato showed that the subject matter of their philosophy could be accounted for in a higher system as a small part of that system.

(b) *The Problem of Knowledge or Epistemology.* A theory of reality and a theory of knowledge are closely related; so it became a part of Plato's duties in case he refuted all the arguments of the Sophists and individualists to formulate a theory of knowledge which would square with what he considered the real to be. The doctrine of his opponents, summarized, as we have said, in the maxim that man



is the measure of things, derives all knowledge from perception. The real is what you see, hear, taste and touch. But since it is clear that the senses are often deceptive we must have a more stable form of knowledge than that which we gain in perception. If sense knowledge be true knowledge, as the Sophists taught, then one man can be no wiser than any other; and indeed it is impossible for man to be any wiser than the animal for it can see and hear as well as man. Plato wonders why it is that Protagoras, the great teacher, should be paid to teach people provided he believed that man is the measure of all things, for if this is true any one else should know as much as Protagoras.

Plato says, in this connection, in that great dialogue on knowledge, the *Theætetus*,

"I am charmed with his (Protagoras') doctrine, that what appears is to each one, but I wonder that he did not begin his book on Truth with the declaration that a pig or a dog-faced baboon, or some other yet stranger monster which has sensation, is the measure of all things; then he might have shown a magnificent contempt for our opinion of him by informing us at the outset that while we were reverencing him like a god for his wisdom, he was no better than a tadpole, not to speak of his fellow men—would not this have produced an overwhelming effect? For if truth is only sensation, and no man can discern another's feelings better than he, or has any superior right to determine whether his opinion is true or false, but each, as we have several times repeated, is to himself the sole judge, and everything that he judges is true and right, why, my friend, should Protagoras be preferred to the place of wisdom and instruction, and deserve to be well paid, and we poor ignoramuses have to go to him, if each one is the measure of his own wisdom?"<sup>1</sup>

Thus Plato is not in sympathy with the Sophistic doctrine that knowledge is sense perception. He does not deny that sense perception has a place in knowledge—it stimu-

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Theætetus*, 161. Jowett Translation.

lates to knowledge, but is not itself knowledge. What then is knowledge? It is concerned with the *ideas*, and not with copies or particulars. It seemed clear to Plato that there are ideas which can never be derived from sense experience, such as the axioms of mathematics and the fundamental premises of logic. Equality, greater than, difference, identity, and such as these can never be gained, thought Plato, by sense perception. Plato thought that, by showing that certain ideas such as we have mentioned could not be gained by sense perception, it would greatly weaken the case of those who urged that *all* knowledge is perception. That is, if certain bits of knowledge can be shown to have any other origin than through perception, it may be doubtful whether perception has much to do with knowledge at all. True knowledge comes as a result of the grasping of universals, ideas, forms, types, by the soul. The soul is active in ordering and shaping the material which the senses supply in terms of the universals or types. To behold the idea it is necessary to get away from eyes and ears and to put our faith in reason only. The body "draws the soul down into the region of the changeable, where it wanders and is confused; the world spins round her, and she is like a drunkard when under their influence."<sup>2</sup> So the world of sense, the field of interest of the *demos*, is a field of unreality, illusions, and not worthy of the efforts of the real man.

How does man reach the idea, how ever get at it, since the body with its senses tends to hold man down to the world of shadows? This question leads to

(c) *The Problem of the Soul*. True knowledge is of eternal ideas; and knowledge is the highest function of the soul. The soul knows these unchangeable ideas because it had a former existence up somewhere in the realm of ideas.

<sup>2</sup> *Phædo*, p. 79. See also *Republic*, pp. 515 ff.

The soul dwelt among these pure forms where it beheld them in their perfection—there it saw perfect circles, perfect justice, perfect types of all kind. Here on earth it *remembers* these types, but they are somewhat dimmer and more washed out in memory than in reality; and to be known again in their pure form requires the greatest intellectual effort on the part of man. In fact this is the greatest achievement man is capable of—to behold again in pure form the eternal ideas witnessed in the period of former existence of the soul. The very fact that we are able to speak of imperfect things involves a knowledge of that which is perfect; of finite things, infinity; of bad things, good. Such ideas could not have been reached in this world where the senses hold us down to the things about us but are possible only on the theory of a former perfect existence of the soul in a perfect realm.

While the chief virtue of the soul is knowledge, rational insight, ability to comprehend the real; the soul of man is also *spirited*, that is, affective, emotional. As the rational soul abides in the head and has wisdom as its virtue, the spirited element is found in the heart, and has courage as its virtue. There is also another type of soul life, low, to be sure, but present, which occupies the lower parts of the body, corresponding to the passions; and whose virtues are temperance and obedience. This soul theory is well worked out in

(d) *Plato's Theory of the State*.<sup>3</sup> The state is the individual "writ large." Corresponding to the three parts of the soul, Plato finds three kinds of people in the state, namely, the rulers who are the highest class, and who correspond to the head; the soldiers or guardians of the state, who correspond to the heart; and the traders, merchants,

<sup>3</sup> See the Republic.



and laborers, who correspond to the lower and baser passions of men. It is the business of the head to rule, of the heart to protect, and of the lower parts to obey and work. The head is the only means by which the eternal ideas, the immutable reality, can be reached; the only means of reaching the Good, the highest idea. What can a ruler do if he does not know the highest good? How can he know it if he is eternally mixed in petty strife, in immediate battles of politics? We see that Plato showed that the *demos* could not rule a state because they had not *head* for the purpose—they were those who were governed by the baser passions, those who ought to obey and serve, not govern. We see that Plato makes a strong case against the individualists and democrats when he shows that they have not intelligence enough to rule, since they are held down by the things of sense, and can not gain access to the true Good but must be blind to its nature. The philosopher is the only one capable of ruling for he alone can get back again to that original home of the soul where he can view things as they truly are, where he can see the eternal and abiding Good.

We see in every problem that Plato treated his chief purpose, namely, to refute the individualistic tendencies of his times. He shows that there is something permanent in the universe for the purpose of refuting the dominant idea of change; he shows that the chief idea is the Good for the purpose of refuting the "might-right" theory; he emphasizes the place of knowledge to show that the common people are incapable of governing themselves; he places them in the disparaging position of occupying the lower regions below the midriff for the purpose of showing their inability of doing anything of higher value. In summary, his metaphysics, his epistemology, his psychology, and his political theory are all the outcome of definite social conditions which prevailed in

his day. We may indeed think of Plato as a great lawyer who was pleading a case before the bar of man's intellect, the chief point at issue being permanence *versus* change, the one *versus* the many, the universal *versus* the particular. His vision in behalf of his client was world wide—he realized that an answer involved a consideration of the fundamental problems of philosophy.

We should expect to find Plato on the side of permanence. He was an aristocrat and possessed the time for the contemplation of the *idea*; he desired to see his own social class in that position of authority which it had formerly occupied, and no one was better able to pass judgment on the defects of Greek democracy than was Plato.

The advocate of permanence is he whose "rights" have already been established; the champions of change are those who are seeking a footing in the already established order of things. This principle applies to all the interests of man.

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## CHAPTER X

### PHILOSOPHY FROM THE DECLINE OF GREEK SPECULATION TO THE RENAISSANCE

1. **Introduction.**—The purpose of this chapter is to show the main currents of life from the period which marks the death of Aristotle and the decline of Greek philosophy to the great revival of thought and life beginning about the time of Descartes (1596-1650). We can merely indicate some of the currents of this period, for it is very suggestive in many ways, but, on the whole, barren of any great free philosophical systems. The chapter intends to serve as a bridge to connect the long period between the two *idealisms*, Platonic, and Berkeleyan. As in the former system we found a cause to be pleaded, an emergency to be met, so in the latter we shall see definite reasons for the celebrated doctrine, "*esse est percipi*." We must know something of the tendencies of the times between 300 B. C. and 1600 A. D. to gain an adequate idea of the great flaring-up of speculative thinking beginning about the latter date.

We have noticed the gradual breakdown of Greek social and political life during the time of Plato and of the attempt of Plato to meet the growing individualism and democracy of the period. His attempt failed for Greece soon became a subject state first of Macedon and in 146 B. C., of Rome. Man could then find no consolation in being a member of a city state or of a social order that no longer



existed; he could no longer find means of expression in the duties of citizenship and a guide of action in a religion which had been supported by a state. Man must have some principle, however, as a guide to life, and to find such a principle was the task of philosophy and religion for several centuries after the death of Aristotle.

**2. Nature of Philosophy after Plato and Aristotle.**—Philosophy came to be truly a “way of life.” “Philosophy is not a theory for popular acceptance and designed for show; it is not in words but in deeds”; but it directs our lives, shows what ought to be done and what ought to be left undone, sits at the helm of life and guides the course amid dangers and troubles. When things have gone beyond the control of man as they had in Greek days, he may take several possible courses of action to satisfy the demands of life; for this is certain that man cannot live without some guiding principle, some type of philosophy. In the period just after the breakdown of Greek life, man sought a guiding principle within himself. Since the world had got the better of him, his plan was to get away from the world of the object and to the world of the subject. He found he could not control the world of objects but he had the belief that the world within was his own and that he could there find life abundantly. If life is within, thought the man of 300 B. C., the world may go her course without disturbing me. Thus the philosophy of the early part of the period after Plato attempts to teach man how to live happily. There were different methods of living a life of happiness, a life within, and these methods give origin to the types of philosophy of the period. These we shall examine very briefly.

(a) *Epicureanism*. About 306 B. C. Epicurus gathered about him in his garden at Athens a group of like-minded

individuals who were interested in finding a principle to guide life in those chaotic days. Their philosophy, therefore, centers about ethics, and of a type which we know as *hedonism*, the doctrine that pleasure is the highest good.<sup>1</sup> Epicurus, however, is careful to say that it is not the kind of pleasure that comes with the ungoverned exercise of the senses, for this may bring evil; but rather the pleasures that come with friendship and balance of mind. It is more the pleasure that results from calm and quiet, the freedom from pain, worry and fear, that Epicurus has in mind. Fear, he thinks, has been the chief source of worry and discontent. This is for those who have not as yet seen the vision of the highest good. He consequently protests against religion because he believes it to be the source of fear, the chief source of worry among men.

Epicureanism must have a philosophy, a means of interpreting the world of facts so that its ethics might appear plausible. The first principle that Epicurus needs to establish is to undermine the idea of the immortality of the soul, for this, he thinks, is the basis of religious fear; for if the soul perishes with the death of the body, surely there is no use to worry about the future life. The second point that he wants to make is that there are no gods to reward and punish man, to upset the calculations of life, or to send plagues and earthquakes. These points he establishes by the atomic hypothesis of Democritus—given atoms and the space they move in, then everything can be explained. The physical universe, the soul, everything are atoms in motion. We should not fear death and the gods but should lead a life of pleasure and calm amid our friends. This doctrine, simple, direct, requiring no great intellectual effort, ap-

<sup>1</sup> The various types of hedonism are not introduced in order to avoid confusion.

pealed to many during the period of unrest and instability.

(b) *Stoicism*. Another "way of life" was Stoicism, founded by Zeno (340-265 B. C.). Stoicism and Epicureanism have many points in common, chief among which are the desire to escape from the disturbances and wants that are common to man, and to discipline the mind to find happiness and satisfaction within itself instead of in the world of affairs. But the Stoics developed a different metaphysical theory as a foundation for their beliefs and desires. They took the doctrine of Socrates that virtue is the highest good, denied the atomic doctrine of Democritus, and accepted the view of the unity of nature. "Reality is an organic whole, an intimate combination of form and matter, soul and body, through which one universal life pulsates." Thus, conformity to nature is the highest good. But conformity to nature involves a knowledge of nature; and we may say that virtue is knowledge—practical knowledge which grows out of the demands of conduct. Knowledge is the highest power of the soul, and standing over against reason or knowledge are emotion and desire, and instead of being, as Plato taught, parts of the soul, are diseases and imperfections of it. Therefore, the emotions must be destroyed, so that, in the end, the ethical ideal is complete freedom from the emotions and feelings—a following ever of the lead of reason. The true life is one that is free from all emotional agitation, cold to the world and to the things that lie about, rigorous and stern in the presence of all that we consider emotional and suggestive, and reminding one not a little of the passive, unemotional life of the American Indian in the presence of his enemies. Evil only is that which we regard as such, and though a thing may harm the body it can never reach and disturb the *real self*, that inner man which takes its origin from and has its being in the world soul. No joys are



equal to those that come to him whose mind is serene and sober, and no one can participate in these supreme joys whose thoughts and life are centered about the petty things of earth below.

The Stoic doctrine of the omnipresence of God in the world, its emphasis on the inner law of man's nature, and the concept of self-denial, are points of likeness between it and Christianity, similarities which rendered easier the acceptance of the doctrines of Jesus, which were now coming as a rival doctrine of a way of life. But Stoicism was too cold, and required too great an effort intellectually to appeal to the great majority of men of that time. A doctrine of *expression* rather than one of *suppression* makes a stronger appeal to man.

(c) *Mysticism*. In the struggle for a firm foundation amid decay men may give up *rational* methods of control, may forsake reason and resort to faith. Reason which had held a great place in Greek life had its day, while the demands of the heart had been in some ways cast aside. Man can no more live by knowledge alone than he can by bread, and it seems that a proper balance between knowledge and feeling is hard to reach. One age is wholly rationalistic; another is romantic. The pendulum always seems to swing to extremes. When knowledge becomes bankrupt, when it is unable to develop a type of society in which man is satisfied, when, in other words, man has reached the limits of his achievements along any line, he may become mystical, romantic, poetic. When the situation gets the better of him he quits thinking and becomes a poet, romancer, or mystic. Man generally becomes Orphic in his tendencies at the point of loss of control over the facts of his social and political life.

About the beginning of the first century before Christ

a close connection was being made between Greek thought and Oriental mysticism. The drift was towards Platonism and Pythagoreanism. The Orphic tradition, emphasizing the old soul ideas, and the evil and inferiority of matter rendered the soul of man the chief topic of philosophic interest; and science, once so powerful a factor in Greek thought was looked upon as of no value for its subject matter was the root of all evil. Reality was discovered not by research, not by inquiry, but by revelation from above and by an ecstatic vision through the escape of the soul from the evils of the flesh. Reality and truth were not to be found by the methods of Socrates who considered it his business to give birth to clear ideas, nor by the method of experiment, nor even by the method of reason; but reality and truth belong to him who throws his soul into unity with a divine power.

Mysticism reached its most definite formulation in the neo-Platonism of Plotinus (250 A. D.). Neo-Platonism is the culmination of the working together of Greek philosophy and that of the Orient. It emphasizes the moral as against the scientific—it is truly a “way of life,” made necessary by the breakdown of institutions during the centuries just before and just after the birth of Christ.

Stoicism failed to reach the masses—it was a religion or rather an ethics for the intellectual classes only; and Epicureanism degenerated into the doctrine of “eat, drink, and be merry,” which has never appealed to a great many men. To meet the need of the heart neo-Platonism also failed because it was too abstract, it involved too much theory to become a religion of the people.

The chief concept in neo-Platonism is God or as Plato spoke of it, the Good. God stands even behind and back of the ideas themselves and is not to be contemplated, is not the object of thought, but an object of mystical appreciation.

He is degraded when we limit Him within the confines of our finite ideas of truth, goodness, justice, and wisdom. We reach Him not by comprehension but by feeling. Matter is a falling away from God and has no existence, is not being.

Plotinus, the greatest neo-Platonist, was ashamed that he possessed a body, so much so, indeed, that he would never mention the name of his parents. Man's only occupation consists not in the attempt to control the world but to get away from it and back to whence he came, namely, God. This he does by rising above the finite, by penetrating the universal ideas which underlie the world of concrete things. Then when the soul loses all thought, all desire, all activity, it comes into immediate union with God.

It is clear that such a type of speculation is possible only when people have lost in the battles of life, when the affairs of the world are so overpowering that instead of mastering them through intelligence, they fall, like the Oriental and the primitive man, before the powers as a worshipper rather than as an investigator. When a nation loses its nerve, when it breaks asunder the only means it possesses for the control of nature and life, namely, intelligence, it becomes primitive, Oriental, Orphic.

(d) *Christianity*. Men were interested in a way of life, and not in a system of philosophy. Consequently, Stoicism and neo-Platonism failed to meet the vital needs of the age, and both failed to become in any sense universal. Christianity, on the other hand, in its beginnings was free from all speculations and offered a simple method of satisfying the demands of the heart. It appealed to the poor and to the non-intellectual classes as the other methods of life did not directly do because of their abstractness. Belief in God and in the power of Christ in renewing the life of the soul



were the fundamental notes. Not a belief in any set system of doctrines, but a life of peace, happiness within, and right living, were the requisites.

Christianity, at a later stage, however, shared many of the beliefs of neo-Platonism. In the first place they are both religious philosophies. They deal with God, the nature of sin, and the way of salvation. They both believe in revelation as the source of truth rather than reason, but they differ in that Christianity taught a historic revelation, a revelation once for all, whereas the neo-Platonist believed in individual and particular revelations which come to one in the moment of divine ecstasy. Both religions or philosophies were the offsprings of the same parents, namely, the Pythagorean, Platonic, and Orphic tendency, and both inherited many of the characteristics of the parent.

It was not long until the new religion took on the forms of the thought of the day. It could not expand except as it became identified with the modes of thinking which prevailed in the intellectual world at that time. Those of the more intellectual classes who became converts brought their old problems with them and expected a solution in terms of the new religion. Those who had been Stoics, Platonists and Pythagoreans came to the new religion with the problems of philosophy demanding solution; and it was inevitable that changes in the new religion from primitive ideas to a philosophy should take place. Christianity had to be defended in its competition with other doctrines of the times, and this necessitated a formulation of the principles of the teachings of Christ, such as would appeal to the intellectual and cultural classes of the day. As time went on the apostolic tradition had to be defended against heresies which were constantly arising. These facts, then, forced the new

religion to take a definite position or attitude on certain doctrines and tended to render it a fixed and inflexible institution.

The fact that the new doctrine was forced to take a definite position on the great problems of the time had powerful influence on later thinking. By 400 A. D., partly through the efforts of the greatest of the churchmen, Augustine, the doctrines of the church became well established. The new dogmas or doctrines to become firmly established by Augustine and others before him are: one, the freedom of the will, much emphasized at first by Augustine, but later modified somewhat to fit his theory of the nature and function of the church; two, that there is salvation only through the church, thus establishing the church as the greatest of institutions; three, God created the world out of nothing, yet God is absolutely distinct from nature; four, evil is essential to the perfection of the world as shadows are to the beauty of the painting, and it comes about as a result of man's free will; five, man has fallen—"In Adam's fall we sinned all." Man is sinful and he can be saved only by God through the church.

The church became the dominant institution of the middle ages. Within her realm all thinking, all action, occurred. This fact is easily accounted for in view of the decadent state of society at the beginning of the Christian era. The church with its supernatural sanctions was able to appeal to the emotional barbarian of the north whose culture was much less advanced than the decadent culture of the early middle ages. The quiet dignity, the overwhelming mystery, the strangeness of the language, the stateliness of the service, the matchless organization of the church, all appealed powerfully to the romantic Teuton whose life was one of pirating, foraging, and fighting. Moreover, all truth had

been revealed—there was nothing to do but to learn what God in his mercy had already wrought. Consequently, during the early part of the middle ages Europe was learning the lessons that had been assigned, strong in the conviction that these lessons were all the truth. As the child does not stop to criticise the material of his text and the teaching of his masters, so did Europe study uncritically the lessons which the past had assigned.

The lessons were the content of the neo-Platonic philosophy, compilations of ancient science, the inferior codes of the Roman laws, and the literature of the church fathers. All of this material was of the past, and the result was that the idea prevailed that all good things had already been done and man's business intellectually was to learn well the lessons of the past. But little progress could occur under the domination of such an idea, but the time came when the mediæval pupil mastered his task and became able to use the material for the building of a more noble scientific and social world. That time was the period of the Renaissance.

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## CHAPTER XI

### PHILOSOPHY FROM THE RENAISSANCE TO BERKELEY

**1. Introductory.**—The purpose of the preceding chapter is to keep intact the continuity of thought; of the present one, to furnish a background for the second type of idealism, namely, the subjective or Berkeleian. The historical background will make clear the purpose of this, in many ways, extraordinary type of thought, so absurd from a common sense point of view, but so difficult of contradiction from a theoretical one. It will be shown that subjective idealism is a form of speculation which, in the new garb of the time in which it developed, goes back to the old anthropomorphic and animistic tendencies so rooted in man's nature, and that it arises out of a clash of tendencies in the interests of religion and for the preservation of the soul which came well nigh being forgotten in this period of revival.

During the latter part of the middle ages, that is, beginning about 1100 and extending to 1400, marked advance was made in all lines of culture. Thinkers began to make their own contributions to the works of the past masters, ancient writings were restored to students, which were to be mastered before further advance could be made. Among the great centuries of history is the thirteenth. It was then that the works of Aristotle came into the hands of European students, making it possible for the first time for the student to come directly in contact with the best

thought of Greece. Neo-Platonism and mysticism gave way to Aristotelianism, and Christianity became interpreted in terms of the latter.

It was about 1200 that a distinction came to be made which has had powerful influence on later thought. In fact the controversy is with us to this day, modified to meet the conditions of modern life and thought. The distinction was that between the world of science on the one hand, and the world of faith on the other; reason *versus* revelation, science *versus* religion. In the earlier stages of the controversy it was decided that reason was harmonious with faith as far as reason could go, but that a point is reached beyond which reason could not go; and at this point faith steps in with its more ultimate principles.<sup>1</sup> Revelation was above reason, superior to it, and concerning it reason could make no judgments; but that division, as Aquinas had made it, did not long remain. Reason insisted on freedom from the trammels of the church and at a much later period, due to the conquests which reason made in the realm of the physical sciences, reason became supreme and faith took a subordinate position, if indeed at times it figured at all. In fact the general tendency of this whole period well up to the beginning of the nineteenth century centers about the supremacy of reason. We shall inquire into some of the factors which tended to magnify reason at the expense of faith; into some of the conditions, social, political, and philosophical, which brought about a change in worlds—the change, that is, from the *other* world, to *this* world.

**2. Influences Leading to the Breakdown of Faith.**—We have now to consider some of the factors which figured in

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), who was the greatest writer of the Catholic Church and who to this day is its official philosopher, formulated the doctrine which led to the idea of "the two-fold truth."



the shift of interest from the world beyond to this world. During the period of church supremacy man was "a pilgrim and a stranger here." The flesh and matter were sinful, and man's business was to live so that he might gain the rewards of the next world. Matter being evil, science which has matter as its subject and mundane things has no value or significance. But conditions were shaping themselves for a change in worlds, for the final triumph of science over faith. Some of these conditions we shall indicate in the following paragraphs.

(a) *The Crusades.* The crusades, the holy wars between the Christians and the Mohammedans, are important from the standpoint of philosophy because they resulted in the bringing back to the west the learning of the east, because of the geographical interest awakened, of the introduction of new customs which prevailed in other regions, and the resulting conflict between the ideas of the east and those of the west. The Christian west had believed the Mohammedan east to be a place of ignorance and darkness, but they found it to be far in advance of Christendom in science and philosophy. The east had, in fact, carried on the only work of a scientific nature since the time of the Greeks. The Arabians, while in search of the elixir of life<sup>2</sup> and the

<sup>2</sup>One of the important results of the search for the *elixir vitae* was the effects of the principle implicit in the attempt, namely, that it is possible to relieve diseases by means of natural processes. Magic, bones, relics, and fetishes were thrown aside and material methods came into greater prominence. The idea of an indwelling spirit gave way to that of the influence of material on material. The practice of medicine in Christendom was done by saints and miracle workers.

"Nothing could be more deplorable than the condition of southern Europe when it first felt the intellectual influence of the Arabians. An observance of certain ceremonials constituted a religious life. A chip of the true cross, some iron filings from the chain of Saint Peter, a tooth or a bone of a martyr, were held in adoration; the world was full

philosopher's stone, made important discoveries in chemistry, *e. g.*, the strong acids which laid the foundations of the science, and gun powder which had wonderful social and political results. Before the time of Djafar there was no known acid stronger than vinegar, and to him is given the honor of having first described *aqua regia* and nitric acid.

Other discoveries, such as the preparation of alcohol, sulphuric acid, and phosphorus, were made by the students of the east. We can best get an idea of the extent of learning in the east by a glance at the important works of Avicenna, one of the profoundest thinkers the east has produced. Among them are: *On the Utility and Advantage of Science, Of Health and Remedies, Canons of Physic, On Astronomical Observations, Mathematical Theorems, Demonstration of Collateral Lines on the Sphere, An Abridgment of Euclid, On Finiteness and Infinity, On Physics and Metaphysics, and An Encyclopædia of Human Knowledge*, in 20 volumes. Knowing the barrenness of European

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of stupendous miracles which these relics had performed." (Draper, *The Intellectual Development of Europe*, Vol. I, pp. 413-14. See also, Vol. II, pp. 112 ff.) Christendom had become animistic and mythical, had lost its grip on the world, and its desire was to give up this world for a better one beyond. The age of faith had a poor sense of the value of logic and the nature of evidence. This is well illustrated in miracle proofs, trials by ordeal, by battle, and a universal belief in supernatural agencies. If the character of a princess were assailed, she offered a champion; if the witch sinks she was innocent, if she floats she was in affiliation with the evil powers. Such facts well illustrate the type of mind against which the thought of the east came. That there was room for great improvement no one will question, and the improvement did take place in the growing importance of science and scientific method. The east had also the works of Aristotle. The west came in touch with them soon after the crusades, and, while condemning them at first, the church soon took them up and spoke of Aristotle as the "forerunner of Christ."

The eastern influence was, as is evident, decidedly against faith.

thought at the time we can readily imagine the profound influence of the introduction into Europe of such knowledge.

(b) *Economic and Social Factors.* The growth of towns and cities is one of the striking facts of the latter part of the middle ages. The growth of towns and the concomitant growth of trade and industry have much to do with centering man's interests about the things of this world. It also works against isolation and the stagnation that results from it. Life and its interests become transformed, going from the ecclesiastical to the secular, from the other world to this one. A wealthy class came into existence, which joined the king against the nobles and feudal lords because such a union was of decided advantages to trade and industry. The feudal lords were ever jealous of the king, and as commercial classes came to prominence and influence they united with the regal authorities against the nobility. In this manner a connection was formed between government and business, the effects of which are still operative in our society.

Medieval life made no provisions for the individual; there was and could be no expression of individual wants and desires, for all was settled, man's career was thoroughly and rigorously mapped out once for all. But the growth of wealth changed all this; it made possible the expression of such abilities as a man possessed in the business activities that were rapidly growing at the time. From the individualism that was fostered by commercial life grew the movement towards nationalism in direct contradiction to the universal, authoritative finalism of the church. As the individual grew in the face of problems to be solved by the demands of a commercial experience, so did groups and towns, and finally states grow to be rivals in the keen industrial struggles which characterized the age. Individualism



led to nationalism, and to the "self-determination of peoples."

The intellectual aspect of the growth of commercialism can hardly be exaggerated. Inventions which increased wealth and made worldly success possible lessened the zeal for religion, but they did more than this—they favored an empirical attitude towards the affairs of life. Inventions which are made more or less by the trial and error method; activities which are carried on to meet some present need, such as surveying or counting, all lead to results of greatest significance, namely, to the theoretical interpretation of these practical activities. Practice comes before theory and theory can not come *de novo*, but is built out of and upon the interests which practice dictates. Consequently, we see that the very life of the middle ages, especially the latter part of the period, contained the germ which was later to transform the outlook on the world, and the world itself.

(c) *The Growth of Science.* The rapid strides in the field of natural science told against faith, and tended in general to a mechanical interpretation of the universe. This, of course, was disastrous to the church as it was then conceived, for those very elements which she condemned were being used to account for things which she accounted for on supernatural premises. The struggle between the church and science has been long and bitter, and each has contributed her martyrs.

Most striking discoveries were made in astronomy. The Moors had been interested in this line of research for several centuries and from them interest in the subject was carried to the Christian world about the beginning of 1400. Improved instruments of investigation made possible added information. But the most important bit of work in astronomy was that done by Copernicus, a little more than

four hundred years ago. He discovered facts which would not square with the prevailing theory, the Ptolemaic, which taught that the earth was the center of the system of planets, and offered in its stead the heliocentric theory which had been suggested by some of the earlier Greek thinkers, notably Aristarchus. This theory asserts that the sun and not the earth is the center of the system of heavenly bodies. It is probably one of the most revolutionary hypotheses ever advanced, for it changed the whole method of looking at the world, a method which had grown up in the course of the centuries. All speculation up to the time of Copernicus had been made on the assumption that the earth was the center of the system, but when the earth was found to be but a small speck in the great system some of the dignity that had formerly belonged to it and its inhabitants was taken away. The hypothesis of Copernicus was more carefully and accurately verified by Galileo; and later work by Newton and Laplace established the theory of a dynamic universe.

Geographical discoveries were made, which tended to shift the attention of people to new topics, generated a spirit of adventure, and acquainted Europe with the customs of peoples heretofore unknown. Attention came to be centered on the things of this world rather than on heavenly matters.

During the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries mathematics which the Arabs had learned from the Greeks came into Europe; but it was not until about 1630 that advance was made by the Europeans. Descartes developed analytical geometry, Newton and Leibnitz, the calculus, and Newton and Laplace, mechanics.

In the physical sciences important beginnings were made which tended to strengthen the case of reason. Sound, light, magnetism, and electricity were taking important places in

the discussions of physical nature. Pascal's work in the pressure of liquids, Bayle's in heat, Newton's in light, and, at a later time, Galvani and Volta (about 1775) who worked principally in electricity: all these brought about an attitude towards the physical world very different from that which prevailed in the age of faith when matter and the things of this world were thought of as "sinful."

Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood (1628) and other discoveries concerning the glands and various parts of the body of both man and the lower animals, fortified the mechanical view of the nature of the organism. A mechanical universe and a mechanical human and animal body were vivid arguments against a view such as had prevailed at an earlier period.

There were many other factors involved in the growth from authority and faith to reason which itself became a little later as authoritative and dogmatic as were medieval church dogmas, but we can do no more than mention them here. The revival of ancient literature brought the world into connection with the best thought of the Greeks, and students who were tired of the barrenness of medieval thought fell eagerly into the spirit of the ancient world. The Reformation, while not a cause of the growth of a new type of thinking, but rather the expression on the religious side of the same forces which were operating, is of decided interest to the student of philosophy in that it furnishes an example of the widespread operation of forces, of the effects of the mingling of different peoples of different ideals and temperaments, and greatest of all, that methods of looking at problems and values of life as well as methods of solving them are factors and facts which vary from time to time. It illustrates the difficulty of finding *eternal* principles, *eternal* values, and *immutable* ideas.



**3. The Philosophical Expression of the Period.**—The Reformation is the expression of the growing individualism and the breakdown of authority on the religious side; the remarkable advance in astronomy, physics, chemistry, physiology, and the social sciences, is an expression of the same spirit in the world of science; and various reform movements and increased interest in politics is evidence that the spirit of the age was finding expression in the fields of law and government. In all the affairs of life the attention was gradually shifting from the ecclesiastical to the secular realm; and what is more, the very affairs of life were themselves becoming secularized. In no department of activity is this better seen than in philosophy. Francis Bacon was a statesman and a lawyer; Hobbes, a teacher; Descartes, a soldier and a scientist; Spinoza, a grinder of lenses; and Leibnitz, almost everything—statesman, literary man, diplomat, mathematician, et cetera. Heretofore philosophy flourished only under the domination of the church; and the very fact that non-churchmen took part as leaders in the thought of the day is a vivid example of the changed attitude.

There were interesting movements in philosophy during the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, but we shall confine our sketch to the movement which was inaugurated with Francis Bacon. Bacon's chief importance for us is the emphasis on experimentation as the method by which knowledge is obtained. We must begin with particulars and build up a principle, Bacon taught, and not do as the Scholastics had done, namely, to accept principles on authority and to deduce from them conclusions as to what the facts must be. He taught that the aim of philosophy is service for the best interests of man and society, an early expression of what is today more and more emphasized,

namely, the *socialization* of science and philosophy. Bacon recognized the world of faith but he taught that reason has a definite job to do and that was service. He also recognized that, if we ever expect to arrive at true knowledge, we must rid ourselves of all prepossessions and prejudices which he called "Idols," and tackle problems in freedom from all trammels. We must free ourselves from the Idols of the Tribe, those fallacies common to man as man, such, for example as the tendency to interpret the world in terms of souls and spirits; and from the Idols of the Cave, prejudices due to education and former experience, if we wish to gain a true explanation of things. We must banish all presuppositions and begin with the facts, and from these work up to general principles by gradual steps. How different this is from the attitude of authority, reverence for Idols, respect for general principles, which characterized the medieval period!

From Bacon's day onward emphasis has been placed on the *method* by which laws and principles are reached. The method of experimentation, that is the method of controlling the conditions under which observation occurs, has been constantly refined and instruments of various kinds have been devised and developed for the purpose of rendering observation more accurate and making possible a more careful control of the data or elements under consideration. It is through such a development of an adequate technique that science has become such a factor in the development of our civilization; it is largely responsible for the growing importance of reason over faith and for the conquest of the worldly over the heavenly. The older method against which Bacon reacted, the method of *revelatio* and *authoritas*, dictated in advance what the particulars must be. Fact must square with a principle which was known in ad-

vance through revelation or by authority. The common story of the monk who thought he had discovered spots on the sun but who was told by his superior that the spots were in his eyes and not on the sun, because Aristotle had nowhere spoken of sun spots, illustrates the method of regarding facts—that they were already accounted for since everything was known.

Bacon was instrumental in bringing to consciousness the method which the scientist of his day employed. He suggested as a reason for the feeble influence of science and philosophy in his day the lack of an adequate method. The method heretofore had been either empirical or dogmatic. "The former, like ants, only heap up and use their store; the latter, like spiders, spin out their own web. The bee, a mean between both, extracts matter from the flowers of the garden and the fields, but works and fashions it by its own efforts." The true method of philosophy and science, thought Bacon, resembles that of the bee, for it neither relies wholly on the powers of the mind, nor lays up in the memory a great many facts, but takes material and works it over in the understanding.

Hobbes (1625), another Englishman, was greatly impressed with the growth of science, and the certainty of mathematics. He believed it to be possible to find a principle or set of principles from which all the facts of the universe could be deduced in the same manner as the proofs of geometry follow from the axioms. Philosophy for Hobbes was by no means the type of thing which the church believed it to be, the "handmaiden of faith," but he thought of it as the reasoned knowledge of effects from causes and causes from effects. This conception of the business of philosophy was wholly foreign to that view which tied it up with hidden powers, final causes, and ultimate realities.



When we consider what was being accomplished by science at the time of Hobbes, we should not be surprised to find that the principle which he thinks explains the world is motion. It is readily seen that this conception leads to a materialistic and mechanical view of the world. The scientists had applied the principle of motion to the physical world with such success that Hobbes attempted to carry it over into life, the life of animals, and of man both individual and social. All life is nothing more, according to Hobbes, than motion, and to make his scheme complete he planned to work out the mechanical principle in the three fields of interest, namely, matter, man, and the state, or science, psychology and politics. Matter had already been treated mechanically by the great scientists of the time, but the contribution of Hobbes was that *life* which is more interesting than matter can be treated in precisely the same manner. Man and society, that is, psychology, sociology, politics, economics, et cetera, can be treated mechanically just as well as can matter. Interesting as are all the attempts made by Hobbes to interpret consciousness and society in terms of motion, we can not pursue them here; but we stay by our purpose of pointing out that the world of reason was gradually gaining over the world of faith and that religion was taking a subordinate position.

The materialistic philosophy of Hobbes was unable to account adequately for the soul, for consciousness, and for society. It worked well in the realm of the physical sciences but an age which had believed so thoroughly in religion could not so soon throw off the religious view of the universe and espouse one so radically different. A place must be made for both the soul and science, for faith and reason, for mind and matter, for God and the world. This attempt was made by Descartes (1630). He showed that

there is a bigger problem than that of science—that is, than the mechanical scientist of his day thought of it. He drew a sharp distinction between the soul and the body, mind and matter, a distinction which is a reflection of the middle age doctrine of this and the other world, the temporal and the spiritual, reason and faith, science and religion. He recognized that the *self* is an important factor in any situation which is concerned with truth and falsehood. Before this time the self as an agent in the matter of truth and falsehood had not been considered as of much importance; and, consequently, when Descartes recognized the individual consciousness as an agent in the truth-falsehood situation he expressed a doctrine which was soon to be seized upon and put to a much greater use than Descartes had made of it. Descartes believed as did Bacon that the mind must be free from all prejudices, but he furthermore thought that the clearness and distinctness of the idea is the test of its truth, or as Descartes says, “The first rule was, never to receive anything as a truth which I did not clearly know to be such.”<sup>3</sup>

Descartes began his systematic thinking by doubting everything that had been taken as true. His point was to find some one thing at least which no one could possibly doubt, and from this one certain principle deduce the world of experience. The results of his efforts in this direction are summed up in the famous principle, “I think, therefore I am.” Whatever else we may doubt we can not doubt that we think. Consciousness is the most certain thing in the universe. Thought becomes a fundamental fact of philosophy.

But there are objects, there is matter, there is a world. Descartes had also to account for these facts of experience.

<sup>3</sup> Torrey's translation of the Discourse on Method, part II, p. 46.

We shall not discuss the details of his arguments—how he gets from his own mind to God and the world outside, but he does this to his own satisfaction at least. What is of interest to us is that he finds two ultimates, two irreducibles, namely, mind and matter. The former, as has been suggested, is a survival of the *faith* side of the old church dispute in the latter middle ages, while the latter provides for the world of science which was constantly growing. Going still farther back in time, the mind side of the Cartesian dualism is a survival of the Orphic tendencies in early Greek thought, the matter side of the dualism representing the Olympic tradition.

Descartes had left a chasm between mind and matter, two radically different things as he conceived them, and the problem of philosophers immediately succeeding Descartes was to bridge the gap between them. How these attempts were made and what was accomplished in that direction belong rather to the history of philosophy. But one attempt is especially interesting to us and gives rise to the second type of idealism—that of Berkeley, known as *Subjective Idealism*.

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## CHAPTER XII

### SUBJECTIVE IDEALISM

**1. Introductory.**—We have said that idealism operates on the principle of the priority of mind, soul, idea, or consciousness. The difference between the various types lies in the main in the different conceptions of the nature of consciousness. For subjective idealism consciousness is that of the individual, yours and mine. For objective idealism consciousness is something universal, absolute; it is a spirit, mind, or soul in the absolute and universal sense. Objective idealism universalizes the individual consciousness. Whereas in subjective idealism all things are the content of the individual consciousness, in objective idealism things are the content or expression of an absolute or universal mind. But in both cases the primary assumption is that mind in some form is the chief concept in the universe.

We should bear in mind that idealism is both a theory of reality and a theory of knowledge, both an ontological and an epistemological theory. As a theory of reality it asserts that the essence of things is mind or spirit, and as a theory of knowledge it teaches that things exist only in knowledge or consciousness, and that consciousness is constitutive of knowledge or things. As to the origin of knowledge idealism may be empirical or rationalistic, or both.

There is a vast difference between the idealism of Plato and that of Berkeley, but there are many points in common

between them. Not the least of these is the fact that they both have a common ancestor, the Orphic tradition in Greek speculation. Platonic idealism grew up to meet the individualistic and materialistic tendencies of his age as did subjective idealism to meet the demands of the heart against the scientific and materialistic tendencies in the time of Berkeley. Plato combatted the individualistic tendencies, as we have seen, by the doctrine of universals or fixed types which serve as patterns for all the particular things of this world. Chief of these Platonic types was the idea of the Good or God. Berkeley was primarily a man of the church, and sought to show that all the achievements of science could be accounted for in terms of religion. Descartes had made the way somewhat clear for Berkeley, for the latter had but to accept one aspect of the Cartesian dualism, namely, the mental or thought side, to render his victory complete. The scientist, however, had been interested only in the matter side of the dualism of Descartes, and the result of such a procedure was to render materialism and mechanism supreme. Descartes had attempted to find a place for both matter and mind, but in finding a place for both, he created an equally difficult question as to their connection.

With a dualistic system, a system which begins with *two* principles, mind and matter, at least three possibilities arise in reference to the relation that may obtain between them. One aspect of the dualism may be emphasized to the exclusion of the other, that is, one may be considered *the* ultimate, and the other interpreted in its terms. Then again, both may be *true* ultimates which work together in some form of parallelism. The third possibility is that both may be factors in a larger, more inclusive whole, and that neither is an *ultimate* except for purposes of discussion and for the



organization of experience. Of these possibilities Berkeley chose the mind aspect for emphasis, and interpreted matter in terms of mind.

**2. Berkeley's Problem.**—The rapid growth of the materialistic conception of the universe due in a large degree by the conquests of science, led to a reconstruction of religion. All the philosophers of the early modern period were interested in the religious problem, but they considered it in the light of reason rather than faith. Natural religion which taught that revelation is in harmony with reason, and Deism which thought of God as an intelligent creator were the prevailing conceptions in religious speculations. But Berkeley attempted something quite different. He attempted to show that *the world is a mental or spiritual world*. In this manner he got rid of matter altogether.

We may state Berkeley's problem thus: How can a materialistic, scientific world be interpreted in terms of religion? Science may perform wonders in the realm of matter, but if it can be shown that the very stuff that science works with is in its very nature *mental*, then materialism such as Hobbes advocated must fall to the ground.

It is necessary to keep before us the fact that from early Greek days onward the mental was the god-like. The mental was connected with the soul, the spirit, the ghost, the Good, with God. Matter was evil; it was matter that *resisted* the spirit, the soul, the mental; it was the *burden* of creation. Aristotle so regarded matter—it was *recalcitrant*, resisted the form or the idea; Plotinus had an extremely poor opinion of matter; and, in fact, the general tradition of philosophy was adverse to matter. Now, if matter can be explained in terms of mind, if, that is, matter becomes *spiritual*, then science becomes spiritualized, and all is saved for religion or soul. The great achievements of science would

after all be an expression of the soul of man, a soul which, as Plato said, had come from the realm of perfect forms, perfect justice, perfect science, perfect good.

**3. The Scientist's Material.**—The scientist works with definite stuff, data, material. Certain categories are essential to any scientific progress whatever, such as time, space, mass, and motion. Geometry which played such an important rôle in determining the method of science, deals with *space*; astronomy, in which the greatest conquests had been made, deals in part with *time* and *motion*; and the idea of cause, so essential in science, was, in the early stages of scientific discovery, closely tied up with mass. The centimeter, the gram, and the second, the fundamental categories or concepts of our present day physics, illustrate the space, mass, and time needs of physical science. Given these, the scientist believes he can construct a world. Democritus needed atoms and the space they move in, and Newton the same "givens," in order to build quite a stately universe. For the materialistic philosopher or scientist, philosophy is the doctrine of the motion of bodies; but Berkeley believed that he had taken the foundation from the materialistic structure.

**4. Berkeley's Solution.**—The briefest statement of the solution of the materialistic and atheistic problem is that the stuff and the categories of science are reduced to mind, they are mental, and hence spiritual. If space and matter are mental then science is mental and not material for space and matter constitute the stuff that science deals with. Berkeley believed that his solution answered a great many of the difficulties that had arisen in the speculations of the past, such as "whether corporeal substance can think," "whether matter is infinitely divisible," and "how it operates on spirit." He believed, too, that he had overcome

scepticism. "So long as we attribute real existence to unthinking things \* \* \* it is not only impossible for us to know with evidence the nature of any real unthinking thing, but even that it exists. Hence it is that we see philosophers distrust their senses, and doubt the existence of heaven and earth, of everything they see and feel, even of their own bodies." <sup>1</sup> Of matter which has been the material of the scientist Berkeley further says, "it has been the main pillar of Scepticism," and on it "have been raised all the impious schemes of Atheism and Irreligion." He thinks that if the cornerstone of matter can be removed "the whole fabric can not but choose to fall to the ground insomuch that it is no longer worth while to bestow a particular consideration on the absurdities of every wretched sect of Atheists." In this manner does Berkeley, the advocate of religion, plead as did Plato, the advocate of permanence, two thousand years before.

How does Berkeley go about the solution? This is the most interesting portion of his work. We shall begin with space. Berkeley anticipates the objections which will be raised against his arguments and consequently answers them in advance. "It will be objected," he said, "that we *see* things actually without or at a distance from us, and which consequently do not exist in the mind; it being absurd that those things which we see at the distance of several miles, should be as near to us as our own thoughts." <sup>2</sup> Berkeley gives two answers to this objection. The first is that in dreams we seem to see things at a distance when there is no outside reality which causes the idea of the thing. The second, and more important, answer is that given in his

<sup>1</sup> A Treatise on the Principles of Human Knowledge, Sec. 88.

<sup>2</sup> Treatise, Sec. 42.



New Theory of Vision, a work which, in many respects, is modern in tone. He shows that we do not *see* distance at all, but what we get through the senses are sensations of color, touch, and tension. When things are said to be seen in the distance we mean, says Berkeley, that in order to reach the thing certain muscular movements must take place. Vision is nothing more than a sign by which a color sensation stands for a sensation of movement.

We do not see *space*, *distance*, but we have only sensations which are signs of other sensations to be had in the future. Since our sensations are *ours*, that is, within us and not outside, what we know as space is within and not something on the outside.

Matter, "the main pillar of Scepticism," is also shown to be mental. The distinction between primary and secondary qualities had already been made, especially by John Locke who worked about the same time as Berkeley. Secondary qualities are those which depend upon the one perceiving, such as colors, odors, and tastes. If there were no eyes, there would be no colors, no ears no sounds, et cetera. Primary qualities are those that do not depend upon the one perceiving, but are those that are essential to the existence of the object itself, such as mass, extension, and motion. Primary qualities are in the object; secondary are in the subject or depend upon the subject. Berkeley became suspicious of the so-called primary qualities. He believed that if secondary qualities depend upon the individual primary qualities do also; or rather he questioned the existence of any primary qualities at all. Remove from a body its qualities and there is nothing left—its color, shape, et cetera, *are* the body, and these depend upon the one who is perceiving.

Locke had taught that all we know comes through the

senses, but he thought that there is something he knew not what, but which he called *substance* to which qualities belong. Color, sound, taste, and all secondary qualities are, Locke thought, dependent upon the subject, and, of course, are learned in experience. Primary qualities, however, while learned through experience, belong to something, they are *in* something or *on* something, some background which holds qualities together. This background or substratum he called substance. Now, Berkeley also believed that all our knowledge comes through the senses, and he naturally raised the question as to what was the basis or foundation for the idea of substance. He found that there is no basis for it at all and consequently rejected it as a fiction of the imagination. Abstract ideas, such as the idea of substance, are the source of innumerable philosophic woes, thought Berkeley, and a consideration of them led him to his famous statement concerning the ailment of philosophers: "Upon the whole, I am inclined to think that the far greater part, if not all, of those difficulties which have hitherto amused philosophers, and blocked up the way to knowledge, are entirely owing to themselves—they have first raised a dust and then complain we can not see." Every idea is a concrete fact and if we can not find an image back of the idea we can be sure that there is no idea at all.

Thus there is no such idea as *substance* for qualities to belong to and the result is that there are only *qualities*. If there are only qualities they exist only for a perceiving mind. That is, *to be is to be perceived*. This is the burden of Berkeley's discussion of matter: "*esse est percipi*." He asks us to try to talk about or to reason about matter or anything else; then, when we reason about it, or talk about it, we are *perceiving* it. He also asks us to tell what

we mean by the existence of an object or matter which is not perceived or known. If we attempt to tell what we mean by the existence of an object which is not known, he can reply that the very fact that we are discussing it indicates that it is in our mind.

There can be nothing on the outside that corresponds to our ideas, nothing *like* them on the outside of which they are resemblances or copies; for there is nothing *like* an idea except another idea. "An idea can be like nothing; a color or figure can be like nothing but another color or figure. If we look but never so little into our own thoughts, we shall find it impossible for us to conceive a likeness except between our ideas." If these so-called external things are *perceivable* then they are ideas, if they are not perceivable "I appeal to any one whether it be sense to assert a color is like something which is invisible; hard or soft like something intangible; and so of the rest."<sup>3</sup>

Let us recount briefly what Berkeley believed he had done. In the first place, although we are not following the order of his arguments, he, following Locke, criticises the idea of *substance*, showing that there is no such idea: for there is no idea which does not originate in the senses. In the next place he reduces all primary qualities to secondary, that is, primary qualities as well as secondary belong to or depend upon the individual who perceives them. What is spoken of as matter Berkeley reduces to qualities which depend upon a perceiving, knowing mind. Consequently, what science deals with, mass, motion, time, space, are ideas in the mind; so that science becomes spiritualized, dematerialized, and the problem of the scientists is a lesser problem of the religious philosopher. Science is shown to be not all,

<sup>3</sup> The Treatise, Sec. 8.



not able to explain the universe, but to be one aspect of a larger universe, one part in a larger whole, which is to be explained spiritually.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### OBJECTIVE IDEALISM

**1. Introduction.**—We have seen that Berkeley reduced the world of science to spirit or mind, but this mind was the mind of the individual knower. Such a view which makes the objective world depend upon the individual knower does not make a powerful appeal to men, for a more stable and permanent world is demanded. There was a defect in Berkeley's philosophy which was soon discovered by David Hume, who immediately succeeded Berkeley in English philosophy. Berkeley had said that matter is nothing more than a series or group of sensations. Hume admitted this, but he went one step further and said that mind, too, is nothing but a series or group of sensations. In other words, Hume did for mind precisely what Berkeley did for matter. Both the world of the spirit and the world of science are left by Hume as a series of sense impressions; and if Berkeley rendered a sad blow to matter, "the pillar of scepticism," Hume rendered an equally sad one to spirit, the bulwark of religion. Hume's destructive work marked an epoch in English empirical philosophy, and made necessary a reconstruction of all that had been done hitherto in philosophy. When we remember that all religion and science had been reduced to a series of individual sense impressions, we readily see that a readjustment must be made or philosophy becomes bankrupt.

Hume's chief attack against science is made through an analysis of the idea of causation. He assumes that Berke-

ley is correct in the theory that every idea must go back to some sense impression. Every object of knowledge is either an impression or an idea, the difference being the "degrees of force and liveliness with which they strike upon the mind." Impressions are what we call perceptions, the consciousness of things immediately present, while ideas are the consciousness of things not present to the senses. All ideas go back to impressions, all knowledge originates in the senses. How does Hume apply this doctrine to the idea of cause? He does it by asking us to tell the *impression* which is at the source of the idea. Can we *see* cause, or *hear* it, or *taste* it? No, what we see is one thing or event following or succeeding another, but the chief factor, namely, *necessary connection*, we can never see or in any way learn through sense perception. Cause, therefore, is nothing more than custom or habit. We become accustomed to seeing things together or otherwise experiencing them simultaneously or successively, and we say that one is the cause or the effect of the other. In this way one of the fundamental categories of science is destroyed, necessary connection being reduced to habitual association of ideas.

The self, soul, or spirit is disposed of in a similar manner. He asks of us to point out the impression that gives us the idea of soul, spirit, or mind. Since this can not be done, but only some particular perception such as "heat or cold, light or shade, love and hate, pain and pleasure," Hume concludes that what Berkeley calls "mind" or "spirit" is merely a group of such perceptions. Consequently the world as Hume left it is a sorry one for both science and religion.

**2. What Objective Idealism Is.**—We can best understand what objective idealism is by keeping in mind Berkeley's subjective idealism. The latter asserts that the world is



the individual's idea, that to be is to be perceived by some mind. The world is *within*; it is a group of impressions and ideas. Objective idealism is intended to remedy the defects of subjective idealism by removing the world from the mind of the individual thinker and making it the idea of a greater mind, a universal mind, a God mind. The purpose is the same in both cases—to subordinate science to faith, or to interpret materialism in terms of spiritualism; but whereas Berkeley had done so with the individual mind, objective idealism attempts the same thing on a larger scale—it universalizes the individual. The world is not *my* idea, says objective idealism, but is the idea of a greater mind, of which my finite mind in some way partakes. As art is an idea objectified, rendered tangible and visible; so is nature and the world at large the objectification of a divine or universal mind. As far as the individual knower is concerned this type of idealism is objective, but from the point of view of the universal mind things depend upon it as they do in the subjectivistic type as represented in Berkeley.

Speaking in terms of the outline at the end of Chapter VIII, we may say that objective idealism is a theory of knowledge and also a theory of reality. The real is a system of ideas which is the product of a superhuman creative intelligence. Knowledge, in one sense of the term, is just the process of creation, of making reality. From another point of view knowledge is insight into the system of reality made possible by a divine creative mind. *Human* knowledge in the Kantian sense is the process of constructing a world of objects out of the raw material furnished by the senses.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The student should understand that every type of philosophy must take account of all the problems of experience. We have not attempted, for example, to state the theory of conduct involved in Hobbes' materialistic philosophy, yet materialism has its politics, its religion, and its ethics.

**3. Problems Which Led to Objective Idealism.**<sup>2</sup>—We have seen that objective idealism is the result of the attempt to universalize the mind of the individual knower. What were some of the problems which rendered such a course necessary?

In the first place Hume had shown how unstable is the position of empiricism—that when carried to its logical conclusions it leads to skepticism.<sup>3</sup> Yet there are truths in empiricism that can not be thrown aside. Consequently, empiricism must be reckoned with in any attempt to give an adequate view of the world.

We remember, too, that from Descartes to the time of Kant (fl. about 1775), *reason* was one of the great factors in life. Reason had won great victories in the realm of science and it became the controlling factor in the philosophy of the period between 1650 and 1750, in the great systems of Leibnitz and Spinoza—systems of rationalism which bear witness to the powers of man's intellect, and to the influence on the mind of the certainty of mathematics and of the achievements of science. Reason became the lord and master of the universe, and made claims which ap-

<sup>2</sup>We can not go far into the details of objective idealism in this introductory treatment of the subject. We shall state the doctrine briefly as it is found in Kant's philosophy, for this is the foundation of all future developments of this type of idealism. The most complete statement of it is found in the works of Hegel who flourished about 1820. Kant is an objective idealist only in a certain sense, but inasmuch as he marks the starting point of all the great idealistic systems, and of the idealistic movement which began about the close of 1700, an understanding of the problems which he attempted to solve and of the solutions he offered should be possessed by every student of philosophy. The romantic movement in philosophy is another offshoot of the Kantian philosophy, but it goes far back to the Orphic tradition and to primitive animism. We shall have to omit a treatment of this altogether. We can barely mention that it arose as one aspect of the general awakening which is represented on the political side by the French Revolution.

<sup>3</sup>That is, empiricism as formulated by the early English thinkers,

peared extravagant to some, such as its ability to reach ultimate and eternal truth. The results of such a tendency must be taken up in the new philosophy of idealism launched by Immanuel Kant.

Then religion and faith came in for consideration. Religion which had occupied the attention of the philosophers throughout the period from Descartes to Kant had suffered in the war between it and science, but it would not down; and the problems of God, Freedom, and Immortality are the chief interests for the Kantian philosophy. As has been remarked, idealism is always an ally of religion, of permanence, of purpose, of teleology; and with Kant as with Berkeley, the ruling interest is religion. So strongly impressed with religion was Kant that he was willing to sacrifice reason for faith. "I had to destroy reason in order to make a place for faith."

The problem of science must also be considered, for as we have seen, science, the product of reason, had become strong and bold. It laid claim to all creation, and all difficulties of whatsoever kind must be tried at the bar of reason by the methods of science. The method of deduction as found in geometry and that of hypothesis as practiced by the great astronomers dominated intellectual activity. It was essential, therefore, that the new philosophy find a place for science and mathematics.

Briefly, the following are the chief problems which entered into the thinking of Kant in his efforts to formulate a system which would give each its proper place; problems, moreover, which were fiercely contested during the years before Kant:

- (a) Empiricism—a doctrine as to the origin of knowledge, which asserts that all knowledge comes from experience and is based on sense perception;
- (b) Rationalism, which asserts the supremacy of reason



and its ability to solve all the problems of the universe ;

- (c) Religion, once supreme, but at the time of Kant and before, a loser in the struggle with reason ;
- (d) Science and mathematics—the field in which reason had wrought its wonders.

**4. Kant's Solution of These Problems.**—Kant's philosophy is extremely important for several reasons, the chief one being the stimulation towards further developments in philosophic theories. Another reason for the importance of his philosophy is its synthetic character ; all the threads of thought which had figured in the life of the intellectual world from the time of Bacon and Descartes to his own time are taken up and given a place in his system. The Kantian system represents in modern times what Plato's did in ancient—the synthesis of all the currents which the intellectual life of the people had developed. Kant's efforts, however, fared better than Plato's for the modern idealist lived in a more stable society which permitted development and criticism which were denied the work of the ancient sage.

Of the currents which entered Kant's thinking we have mentioned empiricism, a subject to be treated more at length in our next chapter. Here we may say that the movement began with the English monks in the latter part of the middle ages, and that, on the whole, it may be characterized as a theory concerning the origin of knowledge. It asserts that experience is fundamental, that authority unless based on experience is a vain and empty show, and that knowledge is built out of sense material gained by observation of the facts of nature. But Hume had shown how fickle is the foundation of empiricism as this had been treated by its advocates. He showed that if empiricism is true the position of the soul as well as that of matter is shallow and unstable.

Kant felt the necessity of a more stable theory of knowledge than empiricism offered, but he felt also that empiricism contained an element of truth; and with this in mind he offered his famous theory of the relation of experience to knowledge. He asserted that all knowledge comes not *from* experience but *through* or *with* experience. "There can be no doubt whatever," he says, "that all our knowledge begins with experience. But, although all our knowledge begins *with* experience, it by no means follows that it all originates *from* experience. For it may well be that experience is itself made up of two elements, one received through impressions of sense, and the other supplied from itself by our faculty of knowledge on occasion of these impressions." Here we find the kernel of one aspect of Kant's thinking. There are two elements in experience, one that which the empiricists had defended, and which Kant called the *matter* or *stuff* of experience, and the other the *form* of experience, which is furnished by the mind itself. The *forms* of experience are the contribution which Kant makes to the philosophy of the time. Locke and others had taught that the mind is as a blank piece of paper; but Kant found that it is a complex affair made up of *forms*, patterns, or molds which receive and fashion the material that is handed to it by the senses. It is a blank as far as knowledge is concerned, that is true, but it stands ready as a mill to grind any grist brought to it by the customers which are the sense organs—to grind any grist, that is, that it has forms, molds, or machinery for grinding; for there may be grists which it cannot grind due to lack of machinery for the purpose.

Kant finds that there is a kind of knowledge which is independent of all experience whatever, and he calls this *a priori* knowledge to distinguish it from *a posteriori* knowledge

which has its source in experience. Thus we see that there are two sources of knowledge, one experience which answers the demands of empiricism; the other, not in experience at all, but in the very nature and constitution of the mind itself. Empiricism thus finds a place in the Kantian system but it is a subordinate one and is not the chief factor in knowledge as Locke and others had taught.

The rationalistic element takes a prominent place in the Kantian philosophy. That such would be the case is evident from the remarkable conquests of reason, a brief survey of which we have offered in an earlier section. Never in the history of thought had reason claimed more and never were its conquests greater. The systems of philosophy that arose with Leibnitz and Spinoza, the Enlightenment which had such a strong grip on the life of England and France, and which is so clearly seen in the literature of the period, as in Pope, are all witnesses of the exalted opinions concerning the power of reason.

Kant, accordingly, found it essential to make a place for reason and its results in that system which he considered of equal importance from the standpoint of philosophy as was the Copernican astronomy from the standpoint of science. Whether the "Copernican revolution" in philosophy has been as significant as the real one in astronomy might be open to question, but this is true that Kant restated the problems of philosophy and set in motion forces that are operative to this day.

*The Critique of Pure Reason* is Kant's chief work. In this he attempts to answer the problems set by rationalism by assigning to reason the limits within which it could successfully operate. His method consisted in discovering the *forms* or *molds* which the mind possesses, of invoicing the mind to arrive at a knowledge of its stock in trade; and



having discovered this, of showing that it can operate only to the extent of its endowment. Without going into the details of his theory we may say that he finds the mind in possession of four sets of categories or forms which operate on the stuff furnished by the senses. These forms are quantity, quality, relation, and modality. These correspond roughly with the principal parts of speech, those means we employ in our thinking and conversation. In the same way that if we speak or hold a conversation at all we must do so in the parts of speech of our language, so, if we think at all, must we use the categories or the forms of thought. That is, we can not think in terms of any part of speech which we do not possess, but to think at all we must employ those which we have developed. In the same way, Kant thought that all thinking to occur at all must occur in terms of these four fundamental categories or thought forms which are innate, in the mind from the beginning, and in no way dependent upon experience. Empiricism, therefore, is wrong, Kant thinks, in asserting that *all* knowledge is from experience, and that the mind is as a blank piece of paper. Rationalism is also wrong in asserting that reason is able to answer all the problems of life for reason can only operate on the stuff which the senses bring to it, and can then only operate in keeping with the forms or machinery which the understanding possesses. The leather, so to speak, which goes into the factory comes out in the form of shoes because the machinery of the factory is made for precisely that purpose—the making of shoes. In the same manner the raw stuff that comes in through the senses is turned out in the form of objects of knowledge because the machinery of the mind is *knowledge* machinery.

Kant changed the relation that had obtained between knowledge and the object. "In metaphysical speculations

it has always been assumed that our knowledge must conform to objects; but every attempt from this point of view to extend our knowledge of objects *a priori* by means of conceptions had ended in failure. The time has now come to ask whether better progress may not be made by supposing *that objects must conform to our knowledge.*" Empiricism had taught that our ideas are copies of the object outside, but Kant showed that the object is a product of the machinery of the mind—that *we make or construct objects.* The object is our innate forms pressed or stamped upon the material of sense. Objects are ideas in the sense that they are constructed by the machinery of the mind.

Now, it is evident that reason can not operate in the field of man's greatest interest, namely, the field of religion. God, Freedom, and Immortality, Kant urged, are the supreme interests of man and they can not be treated from the point of view of reason for reason can deal only with the material which the senses furnish and they provide no material in the religious realm. Again, the categories of the mind are *rational* categories, forms of *reason*, such as cause and effect, substance, et cetera. Therefore neither the senses nor the intellect can deal with the religious problem, the problem of chief interest from the Kantian standpoint. Reason, as we have suggested, in the hands of the Enlighteners, the rationalists, was supreme in every sphere of interest, but Kant limited reason, showed what its field is, and in what field it could operate successfully, in order to make a place for faith. Reason can work in the world of space and time, of cause and effect, of motion and rest: that is, in the world of science, but it is unable to function in that higher realm, the realm of duty, of morality, and religion. Idealism, in the hands of Kant, takes its old place as the defender and ally of religion. The old struggle between re-

ligion and science was settled by Kant in favor of the former when reason took the subordinate position of the faculty which deals with the spatial, the temporal, and the material. The doctrine of the "two-fold truth" was settled again, not indeed as the earlier thinkers had settled it, for reason and faith belong for Kant to two wholly distinct worlds.

Reason can not prove the existence of God as Descartes had thought, but Kant thinks that even this is an advantage for if reason can not prove God's existence it is also unable to prove that He does not exist. "I cannot share the opinion, so frequently expressed by excellent and thoughtful men who \* \* \* indulge in a hope that the future would supply us with evident demonstration of the two cardinal propositions of pure reason, that there is a God, and that there is a future life. I am certain on the contrary that this will never be the case."<sup>4</sup> But our moral will, our practical reason, demands God. It is necessary to postulate freedom in order to satisfy the demands of the moral law. The good for Kant is the *Good Will*; and we are to act in every case as if we should be willing that our act become a universal law. Are we tempted to kill? Ask this question and govern your conduct accordingly: Are you willing that every one else do the same thing?

Reason operates in one realm, religion and morality in another. By destroying reason or limiting it, Kant limits the field of science—there is a point beyond which reason can not go. But why is science in its own sphere so certain? Why the certainty of mathematics? These were great problems, for mathematics had been the model of procedure. Descartes believed that to be true which was clear and distinct, and the axioms of geometry greatly im-

<sup>4</sup>Critique of Pure Reason. Müller's Translation, p. 741.



pressed him. Why, asks Kant, the certainty of mathematics? How is it possible that we can make judgments that are true beyond experience? Kant saw that on Bacon's principles of induction this could not be the case and he sought to answer for the certainty of mathematics and science, and for the fact that we are able to make judgments that go beyond experience. He answers it briefly in this way: the forms of sense (space and time) and understanding (the categories) dictate what the object must be. In order to have any experience whatever it is necessary that experience take place in the forms of sense and the understanding. Mathematics is certain and our ideas fit nature because space is a form of sense, we see things spatially because space is the condition of our seeing anything at all. So with cause and effect which Hume had reduced to habit or custom. Cause is a category of the understanding and to have experience at all means that this experience is ground out through the category of cause. Nature and ideas agree, not because ideas are a *copy* of nature, but because nature is made by ideas or forms. Consequently we can render judgments which are valid beyond experience because to have any experience at all means that the experience will be rational and scientific.

Such, briefly, is the method employed by Kant to meet the problems which the age had set for him—those of empiricism, rationalism, and religion. But he makes it clear that we never know things as they are in themselves, but know them only through the glasses of space, time, and the categories of the understanding. What things are in themselves we can never know, for to know means that the material becomes categorized. The thing-in-itself became the center of much controversy and led to various interpretations in the hands of later idealists. In Hegel's system the

universe, as we witness it, is the product of an absolute spirit—all objects are ideas made tangible and visible. We have, therefore, objective idealism which asserts that objects are the product of a mind—in Kant, in one sense, it is the mind of man, in Hegel and others the mind of an absolute intelligence or spirit; but for all types of idealism the fundamental fact must be kept in mind that consciousness, spirit, soul, and consequently religion are the supreme categories of life.

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## CHAPTER XIV

### EMPIRICISM

**1. Introduction.**—Empiricism is the name given to the characteristic thought of the English people. We should not get the impression that all English thinkers have been empiricists in the sense we are using the term but the note that runs through almost all of the great thinkers of the English speaking countries is the empirical or the practical. As soon as the conditions of the times permitted an expression of the trend of the English mind we witness the attitude of the man who has a definite thing to be done in this world, a particular problem to be solved, and a practical method of solving it.

The earliest expression of empiricism is to be found in the attitude of the English in the conflict between realism and nominalism in the latter part of the middle ages. John of Salisbury in the twelfth, Roger Bacon in the thirteenth, and Duns Scotus and William of Oakham in the fourteenth century, express the general trend and bias of the English mind. "The real beginning of English philosophy is to be dated from Bacon's break with Scholasticism. The Scholastic philosophy was not national; it represents the common intellectual effort of Christian Europe."<sup>1</sup> "The English language may be said to have become for the first time the vehicle of philosophical literature by the publication of *Bacon's Advancement of Learning*, in 1605 \* \* \* Na-

<sup>1</sup> Seth, *English Philosophers and Schools of Philosophy*, p. 10.



tional characteristics are never so strongly marked in science and philosophy as in other branches of literature, and their influence takes longer in making itself felt." It is true that it is more difficult to mark characteristics in philosophy and science, but in the case of empiricism and English speculation the case is not so difficult as in many others.

Empiricism centers about a theory of knowledge, an epistemology; while continental thought has usually been more concerned with the ontological problem, or reality. We shall turn to some aspects of English life in order to form a better notion of the empirical attitude.

**2. English Activities Practical.**—A brief glance at the method of meeting problems will suffice to illustrate the type of people whose characteristic philosophy is empiricism. The reformation movement which swept Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was met in England in the manner characteristic of the people. There was no radical breaking away, no throwing aside of past experience, but a gradual bending of the old to meet the new. The English scholars sought by a careful study of the New Testament and of the early Christian writers the true meaning and character of the church, so that error might be avoided and modified habits of action set up. In the matter of the formation of the Church of England, also, they acted wholly in response to the practical aspects of the situation—Henry VIII desired to perpetuate his line with a male heir, and sought a divorce and when this was denied by the pope, parliament proclaimed the king "the only Supreme Head on Earth of the Church of England." The practical, rationalistic method of life as against a supernaturalistic and mystical, is well exemplified in the "ordinance Concerning the Times of Assembling at Church," written under the influ-

ence of Calvin (1547). "That the temples be closed except during the hours of service, in order that no one shall enter therein out of hours, impelled thereto by superstition; and if any one be found engaged in any special act of worship therein or nearby, he shall be admonished; if it be found to be of a superstitious nature \* \* \* then he shall be chastized."

The English people developed into a nation of sailors in their struggles against the naval power of Spain. Becoming accustomed to sea life they developed into great traders with foreign peoples, organized great corporations or companies, such as the East India Company, for commercial purposes, made possible the return of the gold that had been for two thousand years flowing out of Europe to Oriental countries, and became leaders in the exploration and settlement of the Western continent. Such a life of trade made necessary by the nature of the country fostered the tendencies already present in the people, tendencies which were present when the early seamen of the northland ventured from their native homes and took up their abode on the island to the westward.

In matters of government the same practical nature is present. The doctrine of "divine right" never had quite the hold on England that it had in continental countries. They preferred to develop a government on an empirical rather than on an absolute basis; and the progress towards democracy in that country is marked by the gradual extension to other classes, generally if not always the lower classes, of rights which in their origins applied only to higher classes. It is true that the idea of "divine right" was held by some of the English sovereigns, notably the Stuarts, but the people apparently did not take the idea very seriously, for under Cromwell they put the king to

death, and finally invited William and Mary to come as rulers, under the banner "*Pro religione et libertate.*" The idea of "divine right" having died in the "revolution" of 1688, the monarchy was deprived of its "divine" sanction, and this fact gave rise to a school of practical philosophers who sought to explain and justify the new theories of civil government which had found expression in the Bill of Rights which was reaffirmed at the crowning of William and Mary.

**3. Factors Conditioning Empiricism.**—We have now to inquire into some of the conditions which are and have been operative in the production of the type of thinking called empiricism, or practical philosophy. What are some of the factors which have entered into the life of the English people, which determine in part their type of philosophical inquiries? It is a poor explanation to assert that "the genius of a people" is such and such, or that their "natural makeup" impels them to a certain type of thought; for such statements do not solve a problem but set another one. People do have tendencies to act, which have been inherited in the long race history of struggle, and the methods by which these tendencies are satisfied vary with conditions.

The early people of England were rovers of the sea, daring, and adventurous, loving excitement and novelty. The country being an island offered opportunities for the further development of this nature in channels of trade and commerce. Such a life brings people in touch with remote customs, keeps worn off the rough edges due to isolation, renders their experience more or less of an adventure, makes for opportunism and individualism, but tends towards a common sympathy due to common tasks to be accomplished.

That the island was remote from the seat of authority both religious and political had considerable bearing on shaping the character of the people. While a Roman prov-



ince it was more or less independent because little or no supervision could be exercised. Far from Rome, the seat of religious authority, the people could be free to a greater degree than was possible in those countries nearby. The geographical location of the country coupled with the tendencies of the original rovers are by no means small factors in the development of the characteristic philosophy of the people.

**4. General Characteristics of Empiricism.**—In its limited sense empiricism is a term applied to that theory of knowledge which asserts that “there is nothing in the intellect which was not formerly in sense”; but in a more general way it signifies the practical attitude which we have briefly sketched. It means to be the opponent of all authority from an outside source; it starts with the demand that all Idols, as Bacon was accustomed to calling our prejudices, be dismissed, and that we start with an open and frank mind to the facts of nature. Observation and experimentation are the only sources of knowledge, for, as was urged by those who opposed the *a prioristic* or *innate* theory of knowledge as this was held by Descartes and other thinkers of his type, the *a prioristic*, innate, or authoritative view was the chief source and support of bad institutions—social, political, religious, educational. The idea of the seat of authority is uppermost in the empirical philosophy. Innate ideas, those born with us or planted in us in the beginning by a beneficent creator, permit of no reform or modification. They are there once for all. We remember that Descartes had said that the test of the reality of the object is the clearness of the idea, and that Kant had taught that the mind is endowed with a set of categories that determine in advance what our world must be. On the other hand the empiricist urged that no movements tending towards reform could ever

fructify on such a theory. John Stuart Mill wrote his logic as a social document—a significant fact which shows vividly how theories even apparently remote from life influence our behavior. In this connection Mill says, “The *System of Logic* supplies what was much wanted, a text book of the opposite doctrine (to the German, or a *a priori* view of human knowledge, and of human faculties)—that which derives all knowledge from experience, and all moral and intellectual qualities principally from the direction given to associations. \* \* \* The notion that truths external to the mind may be known by intuition or consciousness, independently of observation and experience, is, I am persuaded, in these times, the great intellectual support of false doctrines and bad institutions. \* \* \* There never was such an instrument devised for consecrating all deep seated prejudices.”<sup>2</sup>

Empiricism is the doctrine of the school of Locke and Bentham as opposed to German transcendentalism; it is the doctrine of the socializing of science, of political and social reform, and of testing things by their use and efficacy in the problems of science, religion, and politics. It was Bacon who emphasized the social aspects of science and who attempted to make it useful. Knowledge is power; it gives us control over the elements of the situation so that they may be directed; and intelligence, the best available, ought to be applied to the social order. “There is another great and powerful cause why the sciences have made but little progress, which is this: It is not possible to run a course aright when the goal itself has not been rightly placed.”<sup>3</sup> The scientist, thought Bacon, sees only to the end of his own nose and fails to sense the social directions and bear-

<sup>2</sup> Autobiography, p. 225.

<sup>3</sup> Novum Organum, i, 81.

ings of his researches. Locke, Bentham, the Mills, and many social and political reformers of England founded their efforts on the empirical philosophy and that type of psychology which harmonizes with it, namely, associationism. Utilitarianism, the ethical aspect of empiricism, asserted that "the greatest good to the greatest number and every one to count as one" is the principle which would solve the social problems of the times.

Empiricism, as is readily seen, is the philosophy of a practical people in their efforts to solve the practical problems which confronted them. It is not a cloistered philosophy for professors and for the socially elite, but it is a weapon of social betterment; it is not a system for eternal contemplation, but a weapon of offense and defense; it is a philosophy of the people in their efforts to secure the "greatest happiness for the greatest number."

**5. Empiricism and the Philosophical Disciplines.**—The problems of philosophy, as we have observed, are generally grouped under the headings of theory of reality, theory of knowledge, theory of conduct, and theory of beauty. We have discussed idealism as a theory of reality and as a theory of knowledge, but we have omitted the theory of conduct involved in it. We have now to consider empiricism as it works out in the fields of reality, knowledge, and conduct. We shall omit the theory of beauty for this has never figured so prominently in philosophy as the other three.

(a) *Empiricism and Reality.* Empiricism in the early stages, e. g., in Bacon and Locke, differs from later empiricism as to the nature of reality. For the former, reality is the commonsense objective world which we see and hear; it is a "given," static world, ruled by laws the discovery of which is the mission of science. We should remember that it was a difficult matter to surrender the idea of *authority*



which all past thinking and living had accepted. Although Bacon and other empiricists fought bravely against the idea of authority, they failed to see that they were substituting one form of it for another. The older authority had its seat in another world, and the empiricists have the honor of at least removing the seat of authority to this world. Instead of a divine or heavenly order which dictates our earthly policies, they substituted "objective nature" which has the same power of compulsion and occupies the same position as a dictator of our thoughts and life. The difference is that the former is invisible and intangible, while the latter can at least be seen and handled. *The* real for the philosopher of the church and the Platonist is not the world of common sense here below, but the world beyond the skies; the real world is not the scene of our actions here below for this world below is but a poor imitation or second hand copy of that eternal reality that exists somewhere in that mysterious realm of perfect forms where all is harmony and under the domination of the Good; *the* real for objective idealism is the *Idea*, that eternal scroll which is unrolling itself in the life and institutions of man, that Great Authority (a magnification of Kings and Kaisers), which plays the cosmic drama which poor, humble man beholds as a charmed spectator. For empiricism, however, the real is the world of blood and grime, of sweat and toil, of stick and clay—common, indeed so much so that it is often passed over in philosophy as unworthy of consideration in thoughts concerning the nature of "ultimate reality." The real for empiricism is the world in which man is active, but it is a world of compulsion and authority nevertheless; for man had become so habituated to the acceptance of something which must dictate. Matter or nature is the dictator to which ideas must conform, and of which they are copies;

but the dictator is earthly, it is more democratic for it resides at least in man's world of space and time.

This world of objects behaves in a definite way, it acts in accordance with laws, and it is the business of science, according to the teaching of empiricism, to discover these habitual ways of the behavior of objects. Empiricism had a definite way or method of discovering the nature of reality—that is, reality as the common world of man's interests. Objects are operating in a system ruled by natural law, and the laws of the behavior of objects can be discovered, not by the authoritative methods of the Scholastics nor by the deductive methods of Descartes and the idealists, but by the human methods of trial and error, of hypothesis, of experimentation, of induction. The empiricists thought of deduction as the method of authority, a reflection of dogmatic days when man expected a principle or *modus operandi* to be vouchsafed him by some miraculous dispensation of Providence or by some power whose authority could not be questioned. But induction, the method of one seeking information from the facts, the method of the common man in his daily activities as well as of the scientist in the most recondite experimental investigations, is the method of the democrat and reformer. Consequently, we see Bacon emphasizing the method of discovering how things act so that society will profit, so that people will be benefited in their endeavors; and later we see John Stuart Mill performing for empiricism what Aristotle did for authority, performing for induction, that is to say, what Aristotle did for deduction. "As the Aristotelian logic states the methods of argumentation, Mill's logic states the method of experimentation," the method of determining the causes and effects of phenomena. This is what science is for the empiricist—the discovery of the causal relations; and when

we know these relations we know how to behave in the presence of the phenomena.

The real world for the empiricist is just this world of catalogued things, this world of causally determined things. He discovers causes by looking for them just as he discovers anything else; but he looks under *controlled conditions*. John Stuart Mill stated the methods of research, the inductive methods, and shows how the scientist, the man who discovers what reality is, has always employed them in all his investigations.

For the later empiricists, especially after Darwin, the nature of reality differed from the conception which prevailed among the earlier leaders of the movement, such as Bacon, Locke, and Hume. Locke thought of the real as the objective common sense world; Hume, following to their logical conclusions the doctrines of ideas as held by Locke and Berkeley, reduced reality, material and spiritual, to groups of sensations; but with the later empiricists reality became a series of changes which could be explained naturally. A genetic treatment of the world became possible, a treatment, moreover, which is natural, and which seeks to avoid the pitfalls of supernaturalism which, by its very nature, precludes the application of scientific method. Reality is in constant change, an idea much akin to the early conception of Heracleitus of the Greeks, and of Aristotle in his genetic treatment of the problems of psychology and biology. The conception of change, of growth, of evolution has been the most powerful factor in the intellectual life of the last half century—a conception which resulted from an application of the methods of research to the practical affairs of this world.

(b) *Empiricism and Knowledge or Epistemology.* From the time of Bacon to our own, empiricism has regarded



knowledge as *for* something. "Knowledge is power," and is not a luxury added to man that he may contemplate the "eternal plan of things." Of John Stuart Mill, Lord Morley has said that he "recognized the social destination of knowledge, and kept the elevation of the great art of social existence ever before him, as the ultimate end of all speculative activity."

But as has been said empiricism is primarily a theory of the origin, extent, and validity of knowledge—it is an epistemological theory. Where does knowledge come from, how is it gained, to what does it apply, and what validates knowledge? These are problems which empiricism seeks to answer, and these answers determine its name. Descartes had said that the mind possesses innate ideas, ideas born with us and in no way depending upon experience for their origin. Such, for example, are the axioms of geometry, the idea of cause, of existence, of self, et cetera. From the time of Locke (1690, the date of the publication of his chief work, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*), the epistemological problem has been of central interest in philosophy.

The empirical theory of knowledge is best stated by Locke in the *Essay*, and we shall confine our treatment to this. There is one aim, however, that runs through all of Locke's work—the *Letters on Toleration*, *The Treatises on Government*, *Thoughts on Education*, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, and the *Essay*—to show the emptiness in the idle following of traditional opinions and assumptions which take the place of honest intellectual effort and investigation. All his works, too, show that philosophy is an undertaking for the good of society, and not a far-fetched scheme for the delight of subtle minds. They are an attack on tradition, on authority, and mysticism in religion, government, and knowledge. Locke was a man in the world

of affairs, active in the life of his time, and interested in the solution of the problems of his age. He was not the traditional Scholastic, far from the interests of the world, who viewed it "under the form of eternity," but like almost all his nation, a plain, practical man who sees in philosophy a method of making a better world.

What is the source of knowledge? How far does it reach? What are the criteria for distinguishing real knowledge from that which is illusory? These are fundamental questions in the epistemology of empiricism, and in fact, of all theories of knowledge. As to the source or origin of knowledge Locke is sure that it is not in innate ideas. He calls this the lazy man's method of accounting for the origin of any bit of knowledge that could not be doubted as soon as understood, such as the axioms of geometry. "When men have found some general proposition that could not be doubted as soon as understood, it was a short and easy way to conclude them innate. This being once received, it eased the lazy from the pains of search, and stopped the inquiry of the doubtful concerning all that was once styled innate. \* \* \* Nor is it a small power it gives one man over another, to have the authority to be the dictator of principles and teacher of unquestionable truths; and to make a man swallow that for an innate principle which may serve to his purpose who teacheth them."<sup>4</sup> For Locke as for Mill later, innate ideas are the source of deep seated prejudices and bad institutions. Practically, therefore, as well as theoretically it is of great value to determine the status of so-called innate ideas. Locke is strongly against them and offers many arguments in support of his position. He takes such supposed examples of innate ideas as "it is impossible for a thing to be and not to be" and argues that

<sup>4</sup>Essay, Bk. I, Ch. IV, 24.

they are not innate for "it is evident that all children and idiots have not the least apprehension or thought of them; and the want of that is enough to destroy that universal assent which must needs be the necessary concomitant of all innate truths." One would think, Locke asserts, that children and savages who are least corrupted by custom or borrowed opinions would show the existence of such ideas more clearly than any one else; but as a matter of fact they are not found in them at all. Locke claims that there are no innate practical or moral principles either—that is, none which is universally received. Every moral custom of one time and place might be violated in another. Universality, the criterion employed by Locke in determining the existence of innate ideas, is wanting in the case of every axiom of science or morality.

Since there are no innate ideas the question naturally comes, Where and how do we get knowledge? Every man is conscious that he thinks and that what he thinks about and with are ideas, and the question is, How did they get there? "Let us then suppose the mind to be white paper, rid of all characters, without any ideas; how comes it to be furnished? \* \* \* To this I answer in one word, from experience; in that all our knowledge is founded, and from that it ultimately derives itself."<sup>5</sup> The source of our knowledge of external objects is sensation, but there is another fountain, namely, reflection, the perception of the operation of our mind as it is employed about the ideas it has gained from sensation. "These, when we have taken a full survey of them, and their several modes, combinations and relations we shall find to contain all our whole stock of ideas."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Essay, Bk. II, Ch. I, 1, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Essay, Bk. II, Ch. XI, 17.



Having discovered the origin of ideas in experience, Locke seeks to answer the second question, namely, the *extent* of knowledge. Why is it essential that such a question be answered? It must be answered because it will indicate the limits of our ability to know; the answer will make it clear that we are limited in our ability to know. We can know about things which experience vouches for, and concerning what is beyond experience, if such there be, it is idle to speculate. We are conversant only with ideas, and these ultimately come through sensation. Consequently, all of our knowledge consists of relations between sensations and ideas gained by reflection on the material furnished by the senses—knowledge goes as far as experience goes and no farther.

There are many criticisms to be urged against Locke's theory of knowledge, some of them fatal, but it is not our purpose to offer criticisms but to state facts. The essential thing is that this theory is an attempt to make philosophy practical, to take it from the dusty walls and make it a force in the world of affairs, to show that all reforms are based ultimately on some theory of life, and that institutions are always founded on some theory of values. The immediate *motif* of Locke here is to find a philosophical justification for liberalism in government and toleration in religion; and to accomplish his purposes he feels that it is necessary to go to the bottom of the problem of knowledge for a statement of its origin, extent, and certainty.

(c) *Empiricism and Conduct*. The third field, the others being the nature of reality and of knowledge, is conduct or ethics. We have taken Locke as an example in our discussions of knowledge, and for the purpose of the theory of conduct which was developed by the empiricists we shall consider the Utilitarians. Utilitarianism is the ethical as-

pect of the "practical" philosophy. It did not take its origin as such with the earlier empiricists, that is with Bacon and Locke, but came at a later time—the time of Bentham, and the Mills, during the first half of the nineteenth century. Locke and Hume each had an ethical theory in which pleasure, pain, and sympathy figured respectively; but when we come to the Benthamites or the "Philosophical Radicals" as the Utilitarians are sometimes called, we see the ethical interest the chief one. For Jeremy Bentham ethics is a means of social reform, it is a platform, a doctrine, a gospel. Bentham was interested primarily in three reform movements, namely, that of the law, of the methods of punishment, and of the English constitution. His watchword was *utility*, or the greatest happiness to the greatest number, and it is to his credit largely that the Reform Bill of 1832 was passed. Bentham thought that the principle of utility should apply not merely to a local community but that it should apply universally—that every man of any land should come in for equal consideration with every other man.

For Bentham, what is the standard of morality? What determines whether an act is good or bad? Bentham answers that the general happiness is the standard, and that the moral quality of any act "is determined by its pleasant or painful consequences, so far as these enter into the intention of the agent. The motive has nothing to do with the morality of the action, and is in all cases self interest."<sup>7</sup> The thing that counts in action is the result, the consequences, and not the intent for "the road to hell is paved with good intentions." It is by their fruits that ye shall know them, and Bentham would gladly subscribe to the text to the effect that faith without works is dead.

Bentham also added to the hedonistic or happiness ethics

<sup>7</sup> Seth, *English Philosophers*, p. 242.

the so-called "hedonic calculus"—the necessity of an exact calculation of the results of actions as a guide to right conduct. We must weigh pleasures and pains and always act so that the resultant will be a surplus of pleasure over pain, pleasure and pain being the two great masters of man's life. We must take into account the intensity, the duration, the certainty, the nearness or remoteness, the barrenness in painful results, and the fruitfulness in further pleasures, of every act so that the surplus of pleasure may always be maintained. The assumption is that all pleasures are of the same quality and that they differ only in quantity or amount. The right act in every case is that which will bring the greatest amount of pleasure, the kind being the same in all cases.

But it is in the writing of John Stuart Mill that we find the best statements of the ethics of utility. Mill admired Bentham, possibly because of the methods of the latter rather than for his doctrines. He says of Bentham, "It is by his *method* chiefly that Bentham justly earned a position in moral science analogous to that of Bacon in physical. It is because he was the first to enter into the right mode of working ethical problems, though he worked many of them, as did Bacon in physical, on insufficient data."<sup>8</sup> Mill and Bentham agree on the general principle of utility. The fundamental principle of morality is to be found in utility, or the influence of action on happiness. Mill, however, differs from Bentham in many respects. Self interest is the motive force of conduct from Bentham's standpoint, an idea impressed upon him by the social and political life of his day; but Mill thinks "conscience," a man's desire to be consistent with himself, for the sake of his own conscience, is a force which impels to action. Utility is, indeed, the ulti-

<sup>8</sup> Dissertations, ii, 462.



mate appeal in all ethical questions, "but it must be utility in the largest sense, grounded on the permanent interests of man as a progressive being."

Mill draws a distinction between pleasures, which Bentham did not make. They are *qualitatively* different, not merely quantitatively different. This distinction had long ago been made by Plato and other Greek moralists, and Mill takes the same position as did Plato, that the pleasures of the mind are superior to those of the body.

It will be remembered that Bentham thought that consequences alone count; but Mill believed that there is an internal sanction of right conduct, namely, the sense of duty. Results alone must be supplemented by the sense of duty or obligation.

That Mill believed the ethics of utility in harmony with the best moral teachings of the past is evident from such statements: "As between his own happiness and that of others, utilitarianism requires the individual to be as strictly impartial as a benevolent and disinterested spectator. In the golden rule of Jesus of Nazareth we read the complete spirit of the ethics of utility. To do as you would be done by, and to love your neighbor as yourself constitute the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality."<sup>9</sup> Mill believes that utilitarianism teaches that a man may and even must sacrifice his own greatest good for the greatest good of others.

Utilitarianism made strong appeal to the people of the early half of the nineteenth century due in part to its apparent simplicity. It took no great intellectual effort to comprehend the doctrine as is the case with many ethical theories. That the general happiness is desirable seemed to be a self-evident truth and can not be explained except, as

<sup>9</sup> Quoted from Seth, *Op. cit.*, p. 256.

Mill says, "that each person, so far as he believes it to be attainable, desires his own happiness." He believed, it appears, that if each person desires his own happiness that all persons will desire the general happiness. The apparent self-evidence of the principle of utility made it the powerful weapon it was in the problems of social and political life. The utilitarians, to repeat, were men of affairs, members of parliament, officers, and reformers during the first part of the last century.

**6. Empiricism in Science.**—The scientific movement which we have sketched in earlier sections is directly connected with empiricism and the practical. In this connection, however, we wish to indicate some of the effects of empiricism, not on the physical sciences, but on the biological. Men first begin the investigation of nature and subject it to laws. This happened in Greek philosophy where the thinkers of the early days were investigators of physical phenomena. Later they became interested in man and in things alive. After the renaissance we find a similar movement—the physical sciences came first in astronomy and physics, and later the social sciences received their share of attention. The social sciences have been rather slow in making their appearance, and in securing to themselves a definite subject matter and method. The inductive and experimental methods were applied to the objective world long before they dominated the social sciences. Mind and society have been the last of the sciences to be treated inductively and experimentally, and of the two society as treated in sociology is the last. In the sciences that deal with life, especially psychology and sociology, the method consisted in deducing from some "self-evident" principle a set of conclusions which constituted "classified knowledge" or science.

Empiricism has its characteristic psychology as it has its ethics, logic, religion, and theory of reality. It is just such a psychology as would be needed for the general spirit of the revolt against authority, and for the establishing of a democracy in government, industry, and other interests. This psychology is called *associationism*, or the *association* psychology. It originated with Aristotle a little more than three hundred years before Christ but it did not become a powerful social force until much later—until the time of Hobbes, Locke, Hartley, Hume, James, and John Stuart Mill. The substance of the doctrine is that the mind begins as a blank, that all it has comes through the sense organs, and by means of the laws of association of ideas—contiguity, similarity, et cetera—all the complex mental processes can be accounted for.

From the social point of view this psychological doctrine, as an instrument of reform, means that all men are created equal, that is, they all begin life mentally as a blank, and that it is possible to make of people precisely what is desired, since what they know comes through the senses, and is combined in definitely known ways, *i. e.*, according to the laws of association. If we would have people know the good, for example, it is only necessary that they be placed in such an environment where ideas of this kind will be the only ones they can ever gain in experience. In education, likewise, this theory offers great possibilities, and was employed by its advocates in their efforts at educational reconstruction and reform.

But it is in the realm of biology that empiricism scored its greatest success. The results of empirical methods directed towards biology have been of greatest significance in the development of recent thought and action. The revolution in the thought world wrought by the application of the



inductive methods to the field of life is somewhat like the revolution that occurred after Copernicus and the heliocentric astronomy. We shall next consider the doctrine of evolution and its influence on modern thought.

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## CHAPTER XV

### THE DOCTRINE OF EVOLUTION

**1. Introduction.**—The doctrine of evolution is an outgrowth of the scientific, empirical attitude which has characterized the thought of the English people. It could flourish only on a soil which had been prepared by criticism and scientific research, for it represents a temper so wholly foreign to the idea of authority which prevailed earlier that even if the doctrine had been proposed at the time of Bacon and Hobbes it is probable that it would have failed for want of a sufficient background. Although the evolutionary idea had been proposed at a much earlier time than that of Wallace and Darwin, it shared the fate of many other ideas which have appeared before the time was ripe for carrying them into practice and for validating them experimentally. The idea of development was present in the thinking of some of the romantic idealists of the latter part of the eighteenth century, but it is to Darwin and Wallace that we trace the main thread of the doctrine. The work of Darwin covered the field of biology, but, once having employed the method in the biological field, it is a short step to make use of the same methods in all the departments of human interest. If development occurs in the animal kingdom, if nature weeds out animals and plants to meet the needs of the conditions against which they have to struggle and in which they must live, why can not the same be true of institutions, of religions, of moral and ethical theories, and

of systems of philosophy? Darwin's great contribution for the student of philosophy is his emphasis on the historical method of attacking problems. The earlier thinkers were interested merely in what *is*; time meant little or nothing to them, but they desired to see things in their eternal aspects. Although Newton dealt with the phenomena of this world he dealt with them mechanically so that time meant nothing more than eternal change in the same phenomena which did not change. Darwin, on the other hand, emphasized the change in the phenomena themselves. There is a vast difference between change which takes place according to mechanical laws and that change which, while it occurs according to laws, displays the subject matter itself as undergoing modification. Change in the Darwinian sense means change of the latter kind. The naturalistic and intellectualistic attitude of mind that characterized the thinking of the English people from the time of Bacon to the present was developed in close touch with the facts of nature and of mind, in the practical, common sense meaning of these terms; but it was a nature of the fixed kind, one given once for all, and there to be known or copied by a mind which was equally given and fixed. Nature became the dictator, nature took the place of a fixed church and a fixed state; and just as the humble worshipper fell before the dignitaries of the church in his quest for the remission of his sins, or as the subject fell before the throne of his king to beg his favors, so did the philosopher-scientist yield homage to his lord and master, matter or nature. But as was the case in the days of the Sophists, when things began to change, man in a measure lost his respect for them and ceased to pay homage to them, and, what is more important, he began to control them. When Darwin taught that things have a history he exploded the idea of an authoritative nature that



dictates to man his methods of action; he taught us to control nature, not to obey her; not to fall a trembling suppliant before her altar, but to steal upon her unawares, so to speak, and direct her course so that 'things would come about as a result of conscious and purposive directing of her forces in a short time, which otherwise, in the prodigality of nature, would require ages.

**2. History of Evolution.**—The word *evolution* is one in common use and this fact renders its meaning more or less ambiguous. We shall use it to include the general doctrine of change and growth as well as in the narrower biological sense. As is usually the case with most of our ideas we find the concept of development in Greek thought. It was Heraclitus, sometimes called the "flowing philosopher," who taught in developmental terms back in the sixth century before Christ. He is called the champion of change, the great problem of his age being that of permanence *versus* change. "You can not step twice into the same river," says Heracleitus, "for fresh waters are ever flowing in upon you." Of himself he says, "I was once shrub, fish, girl and boy." But, as is well known, the Greeks had no means of testing out their theories; they lacked the machinery of scientific investigation, and the idea of development perished through want of verification by experimental inquiry.

Aristotle (386-322 B. C.) was next to make development a fundamental category of science and philosophy, but he applied the idea more to the growth and decay of existing things. An oak tree, for example, is a series of growths and decays; but there is no attempt at an explanation of the origin of the tree. The real for Aristotle is a graded series of real things, but each member of the series is fixed, cut off as with a sharp knife from all the rest.

After Aristotle and the decline of Greek thought nothing

more came of the development idea until the rise of the romantic movement at the close of the eighteenth and in the early part of the nineteenth centuries. From 1800 to 1835 many works were produced which greatly stimulated the historical method. "General literature, Roman law, medieval traditions, and institutions, classical philology, oriental literature, comparative philology, and at last Christian theology itself, are assailed after the historical fashion, and one research leads to another."<sup>1</sup> Such researches as were made in the fields above mentioned emphasized the fact that things grow in response to factors such as we have enumerated in our earlier chapters—food, war, climate, et cetera. They indicated the fact which is finding expression in our institutions today that civilization is an achievement, that institutions have been won at the cost of innumerable sacrifices, that language is not something which has been handed over by a beneficent creator as a gift to man, but is something that has a history, that states do not come about as a result of a rational contract by which men agree to surrender some liberties so that they may be more secure in others, but that they are the result of struggle and compromise, of much blood and little brain—in short, that things have come to be what they are, and that the past is wrapped up vitally with all that we are and possess.

In science as well the evolutionary attitude was becoming manifest. Geology in the hands of Lyell greatly cleared the way for the Darwinian movement. Instead of catastrophes which the older geologists employed to account for the earth's surface Lyell substituted processes of a less startling but of a more persistent nature. He showed that the crust of the earth has had a history as Kant and La-

<sup>1</sup> Royce, *Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, p. 282.

place had shown in reference to the solar system. When we remember that geology attempts to explain "what both pre-scientific and even intellectual men have in mind when they speak of creation" we get an idea of the importance of the application of scientific method to this field. Creation included the earth as the habitat of man, of beast, and of plant. These problems have always been the center of interest, and have been the subject of religious speculation and explanation from the earliest times to the present. The drama of creation plays an important rôle in our theological speculations and forms the basis of a long and interesting series of myths; and when these matters, heretofore considered as within the confines of theology, are submitted to a naturalistic explanation, we can readily imagine the disturbances that would result in the intellectual world. From the time of Plato species were thought of as fixed, classes were established, and ideas or forms created once for all. The church took up the idea of fixity, emphasized the reality and permanence of universals, types, or species, and the result was that the Darwinian conception met opposition from the church, especially in the early days of the movement. The attitude of the church towards the reality of universals and the fixity of species or forms is well illustrated in the struggle between realism and nominalism during the latter part of the middle ages. The nominalistic side was championed by the English churchmen, and in these early struggles we get a glimpse at the practical attitude of the English mind. When species were shown by Darwin to have a history the intellectual revolution was almost complete.

In other fields of science discoveries were made and hypotheses advanced which rendered more plausible the Darwinian hypothesis. The Malthusian principle that population



increases more rapidly than the food supply had its bearing in bringing to the attention of thoughtful men the idea of struggle in the life of people for food and consequently for existence. Von Baer's investigations in embryology showed the close relationship that exists between the human embryo in its various stages of existence and development and the types of animals in the ascending scale, through the piscan, the amphibian, et cetera, to man. The classificatory work of Agassiz showed the close relationship that exists between the lower and the higher forms of animal life, especially from the standpoints of skeletal formations and organs of the body. These researches all tended to strengthen a naturalistic interpretation of the facts of organic life, and suggested a similar method for social phenomena.

**3. Darwin's Theory.**—Darwin attempted to find a true cause, a *vera causa*, for the facts which had been explained or accounted for on religious and supernaturalistic bases. In other words he sought a scientific explanation, a natural chain of causes which could be verified experimentally, and which would make reasonable all the facts which he labored with. He was interested in biology, that field which was especially difficult to handle scientifically, and which had been the special field of supernatural interests.

Darwin was impressed with the idea of struggle in the political economy of Malthus, and with the facts of selection in the breeding of better and different types of animals. It occurred to Darwin that if man is able to select certain traits or characteristics and make them dominant by careful breeding of animals which possess the desired traits, that it is possible that nature on a larger scale selects such traits as are essential in meeting the conditions against which the organism must struggle in order to live. Since more animals and plants are produced than the environment will

support, some of them must of necessity be weeded out while others will survive in the struggle that necessarily ensues. Those that are best fitted to meet the demands of the environment will survive as a matter of course and will reproduce their kind, while the weaker or less fit ones will perish.

Such a chain of thought led Darwin to three of the essential principles of his doctrine, namely, struggle, selection, and survival of the fittest. There are other essentials, however, one of which is variation. How does it happen that organisms differ in the first place? Darwin saw that every organism even those of the same species differs from every other one. Why this is so is not so important as the fact that it is so. In these variations some of the species will be better equipped to cope with life and its problems than are others, and will survive and hand down to the future generations successful variations. But in explaining how variations occur Darwin is not so much interested. He begins with variations as a fact of experience, and suggests that they are the result of chance. Thus *chance variations* form another essential element in the Darwinian hypothesis. Accidental variations, as is readily seen, are very essential, for if they did not occur there would be nothing for nature to select from.

Summarizing the chief points in the Darwinian theory we may say that in the first place variations must occur; second, there must be a struggle between individuals of the species and between different species for survival; third, that nature selects those of the species that are able to cope with her, that are able to adjust to the demands of the environment; and fourth, that those characteristics which have proved valuable are handed down to the offspring of the successful competitors in the struggle for existence.

Thus, we observe, Darwin furnished a *method* by which

evolution had actually taken place. Lyell and others had shown that it is a fact that it actually does occur, but there is a vast difference obviously between the fact that evolution has taken place and the method by which it has taken place. It is not our purpose to criticise the method although many biologists, while they recognize the general principle of evolution, are not in sympathy with the method proposed by Darwin. It is difficult to deny the facts, such, for example, as the similarities in skeletal structure pointed out by Agassiz; or the existence of vestigial organs such as the appendix and the hundred other apparently useless portions of the body; or the facts of embryology which show that the vertebrate embryo recapitulates the process of animal evolution; and the facts of paleontology, an example of which is the work of Huxley in sketching the stages through which the present horse has passed. While these facts are admitted the method by which they came to be what they are is in question. But this much remains and this is the important matter for the student of philosophy, namely, that development or evolution has occurred.

**4. Evolution in Other Fields.**—We have seen that Darwinism is a theory of biological evolution. It was not long, however, after the publication of the "Origin of Species" in 1859, that the evolutionary method was applied to other interests. Things began to be tested by their use in meeting the problems and conditions against which they were set; institutions were treated as means of meeting problems; history became a study not of bare events chiefly of a warlike nature, but of institutions and activities as expressions and manifestations of the needs and purposes of the age in which they flourished; and in every department of interest, in sociology, in economics, in government, and even in religion itself, the evolutionary method was applied and start-



ling results followed. Philosophy did not long remain untouched by the evolutionary doctrine. It was natural that much criticism should arise as a result of treating time-honored institutions and dogmas as means of adjusting man and his surroundings, whether social or physical. Some types of philosophy came forth in their eternal aspects to overthrow the new doctrine, but it was not long until these very types which claimed to discuss things in their permanent and absolute aspects were submitted to the evolutionary operation with the result that they themselves were shown to possess many ancient appendices which should, in the interests of the organism, be removed; and by heroic, though by sometimes fatal surgery, philosophy came out purified and took her place as one of the means of making this life more valuable and noble.

The evolutionary method was applied to the various philosophical interests which we have spoken of, namely, epistemology, reality, ethics, and æsthetics. These interests were among the last to be attacked by the method, but now problems of this type as well as those of the other social sciences are usually if not always attacked from the evolutionary standpoint.

In our succeeding chapters we shall follow the tendency to solve certain problems of the social sciences, one of which is philosophy, by the evolutionary method.

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## CHAPTER XVI

### EVOLUTION IN DISCIPLINES RELATED TO PHILOSOPHY

**1. Introduction.**—The evolutionary doctrine has, as we have said, entered every field of intellectual interest, and the student of recent and contemporary thought can not comprehend such endeavors except in terms of the evolutionary hypothesis. It is essential also to bear in mind that this conception is primarily a result of the empirical mind and the empirical methods of thought which we have emphasized in earlier chapters. We have attempted to emphasize the empirical attitude for it seems evident that it is the most fruitful of all types of philosophy. Not that classical empiricism as formulated by Bacon and Locke, worked out by Hume, and later taken up by Bentham and the Mills, is a philosophy which is not open to serious criticism from a technical point of view; but the attitude of the empiricist is, we believe, the most fruitful for the solution of problems which are valuable in man's experience. Empiricism is valuable not so much for the formal theory which has been advocated by its adherents but for the stimulation of recent students to other types of thinking closely related in spirit to it. These related types of thought avoid many of the technical difficulties of the older empiricism and at the same time retain the valuable aspects of it. In the earlier days of the empirical movement there was a groping after principles which have since been more clearly defined, more elaborately worked out, and more carefully systematized.

One of the chief difficulties which haunted the earlier em-



piricist and one which he never completely solved was the problem of the relation of mind and matter left to philosophy by Descartes. Empiricism was never able to offer an adequate solution of the relation between the two apparently different things, but usually spoke of mind as copying things or nature which was given and fixed once for all. Ideas, it thought and taught, were copies of things. Thus empiricism left two worlds—that of ideas and that of things—standing one against the other with little or no connection between them. This difficulty arose as a result of the habit of mind of considering something as an *authority*. Empiricism, it will be remembered, is democratic and took its origin in a revolt against the authority of Scholastic reasoning of the middle ages, against fixed principles, and, in fact, against all forms of authority. But in so doing it became tangled with another form of authority in the nature of matter, and struggle as it would it could never free itself from the compulsion of its master. But empiricism needed this difficulty corrected, and a correction of this led to one of the profound developments of recent philosophy. Evolution in the biological sense is an offshoot of empiricism in the realm of science as Utilitarianism is in the field of ethics, and our purpose now is to indicate the influence of evolution on certain of the disciplines closely related to philosophy. We shall not attempt an elaborate treatment but select a field or two more for the purposes of examples.

**2. Evolution and Psychology.**—The doctrine of evolution had a profound effect on psychology in at least two directions, namely, in the scope or extent of the subject matter of the science, and in the nature of the subject matter itself. The animal mind came in for its share in psychological discussions and the new science of comparative psychology came into existence.

The evolutionary doctrine had emphasized the close physi-

cal relationship that exists between man and the lower animals and the question naturally occurred to Darwin and especially to psychologists following him, Are they alike psychologically? They have similar sense organs, and since the sense organs are, according to the old empirical theory of knowledge, the gateways of all knowledge, is it not necessary that man and the lower animals have in common many mental traits? In the "Descent of Man" Darwin considers the several instincts, the emotions, and the higher processes such as reasoning, and beliefs even of a religious nature, and affirms that these are common alike to man and to many of the lower animals. He shows that love and hate, fear, jealousy, courage, curiosity, sympathy, reverence, fidelity, attention, memory, imagination, reasoning, progressive development, self-consciousness, language, and the sense of beauty are common possessions of man and many of the lower animals. It is evident that such conclusions would stimulate research on the part of men interested in the evolutionary theory and its psychological bearings; and the conclusions reached by Darwin have been the subject matter of many an experimental inquiry since his day. Darwin's generalizations in many cases have been found too sweeping and founded on insufficient evidence.

A closer definition of the terms of psychology has come about as a result of the Darwinian movement. For example, the term *intelligence*, has undergone careful and scrupulous study with a view to determining criteria for its presence. Darwin was far too anthropomorphic in his interpretations of animal behavior. This is one of the serious difficulties even today; for the tendency to interpret matters in terms of man's own experiences is, as we have seen, deeply rooted in his nature. Consequently, in the beginnings of new sciences, we tend to interpret phenomena in terms of

what is best known to us, namely, our own behavior, our own desires, longings, purposes, and aspirations. Such terms as emotion, instinct, will, intelligence, feeling, knowing, and, in short, the whole vocabulary of psychology has undergone refinement and revision.

Human psychology has profited greatly from the Darwinian movement. Once the science was defined as the "science of the soul," or the "science of consciousness as such"; but the evolutionary method changed this manner of stating the nature of human psychology. Instead of a structural view, a sort of anatomy of the "mind," the chief purpose of which was to describe, analyze, and build up out of the elements which analysis displayed a "science of mental activities," the evolutionary method attacked the problems rather from a functional viewpoint, from the side of the physiology of the "mind" rather than from the anatomical. Instead of *describing* the new hypothesis rendered the business of the science as that of *telling the use of* the "mind," working on the correct assumption that a thing is what it *does*.

Not so much attention is now given to what the "mind" contains, but much more to what it is good for; not so much attention is now given to the analysis of an emotion, but more is given to the search for methods of their control and proper ordering. Perception, memory, imagination, association, judgment, and reasoning are all treated not as "faculties" of a mysterious and secluded entity called the "mind," but as instruments for guiding action. The "mind" as a result of the Darwinian theory becomes a functional and not a structural affair. It is something that aids in meeting the problems of the organism in adjusting the environment to itself and itself to the environment. As hands, hoofs, horns, fins, nails, tails, and teeth have come to be in



the play of the organism and the environment; so has the "mind," and not as has been taught as a luxury given to man for the purpose of eternal contemplation of the mysteries and beauties of the universe. It is there for use and is not a donation but an achievement wrested from nature in the mutual play of natural forces.

The method of treatment of the subject matter of psychology has likewise been revolutionized. *Genetic* is a word used to indicate that the subject matter of psychology has a history—both that of the individual and of society. The individual begins life with a group or system of pathways in the nervous system already formed. When these are stimulated the individual is said to react instinctively; and we have learned to treat the higher forms of behavior as based upon and growing out of these fundamental race habits which the individual inherits in the form of preformed nervous pathways. Darwin gave but scant attention to the instincts but later psychologists make them fundamental in the life of the individual and of society. Social psychology, another science which is largely the result of Darwin's work, makes of the instincts the fountain springs of all our elaborate behavior. Curiosity, flight, pugnacity, self-abasement, self-elation, the parental instinct, and repulsion—these, says a modern social psychologist,<sup>1</sup> are at the root of all our complex modes of action. Through automatic, reflex and instinctive behavior we come historically to a type which we may call conscious, using "conscious" as an adjective to describe that type of action which occurs when the other types fail to meet the needs of the organism, and which is further characterized by delay in the response to the stimulus which calls it forth.

Darwinism, it is evident, has so influenced psychology that

<sup>1</sup> McDougall, *Social Psychology*.

whereas it was once the "science of the soul," it now takes its place among the common earthly things as the "science of behavior."

**3. Evolution in Political Theory.**—Every philosophical theory involves a theory of the state and from Plato's day to our own the great thinkers have usually stated the type of theory of the state which follows from the nature of their speculation. For Aristotle, indeed, ethics is subordinate to politics, and Plato made political theory the most important side of his speculations. His greatest work is the *Republic*, a book which has influenced political thought more than any other which has ever been written. "Utopias," "Ideal Societies," and "Cities of God" have engaged the attention of the keenest intellects the world has produced. The *New Atlantis* of Bacon, the *Leviathan* of Hobbes, the *Civil Government* of Locke are works which have come from the hands of empiricists in the realm of political theory. It is evident that a theory of the state, its nature and functions, is highly significant and important for man lives and has his existence in some form of political organization. Peace conferences and leagues of nations are the most recent expressions of what men think of states and their functions.

Our immediate purpose is to show the influence of the doctrine of evolution on political theory. Many volumes have been written on this topic and we can but indicate some of the main phases. Since Darwin's time there has been a constant revision and restatement of the nature of the influence of evolution on politics. The first important treatment of this subject from the evolutionary point of view came from Herbert Spencer, who worked for about forty years on his "Synthetic Philosophy." Spencer thought that he had discovered the general principle or formula of evolution, and having discovered it, he grouped about it all the intellectual

achievements and interests of man. Sociology, politics, ethics, psychology, et cetera, are all expressions of this universal formula. They all illustrate, as Spencer tries to show, the operation of the general formula which sounds formidable but which is simple when understood. Spencer's definition or formula of evolution is: "Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion; during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity; and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation."<sup>2</sup> It is but little wonder that, upon reading the definition for the first time, we sympathize with the sentiment of the student who suggested that the universe must have heaved a sigh of relief when it heard from the lips of Spencer the method by which it came to be what it is; but after all the essence of the formula is that development has occurred through increasing diversity and interdependence of structure and function. The organism breaks up into smaller parts functionally and structurally, but these parts are more and more dependent one on the other as they break up or differentiate.

With the general formula before us, the formula discovered, Spencer thinks, inductively, an attempt is made to exhibit it deductively, to show, that is to say, that every evolving phenomenon exhibits three characteristic features, namely, integration, differentiation, and determination. Since this is the way evolution has occurred, what theory of the state follows from it? It is evident that, if the principle is true, society is a growth, and the state is something that has come to be. Spencer finds that a military era came early, and this has been succeeded by the industrial. The military era, the era of authority, should, therefore, give

<sup>2</sup> First principles, p. 396.



way to the industrial; and from this the conclusion is reached that the state should not interfere in the life of its citizens. If the state or any other external authority interferes, the rights of the individual are taken away and his equal chance is gone. Spencer thought that every individual has rights limited only by the equal freedom of others and that any interference on the part of the state would limit the rights of the individual. His doctrine, therefore, is known as the *laissez faire* doctrine of the state—the hands off or let alone theory, a sort of Monroe Doctrine applied to the state itself.

We must not forget that the Utilitarians worked for freedom and against the authority of the state, but Spencer found what appeared to him a philosophical justification of the doctrine of non-interference. Freedom of speech, of assembly, the repeal of ancient laws against the laborer were demanded as essential to the *natural* development of society. Darwin emphasized *natural* selection as one of the elements in the determination of present forms; and as the state is constituted, Spencer urges, it is not *natural*, but an artificial construct which actually prevents the free play of natural forces. The state, Spencer thought, should follow natural lines, that is, should let alone. Nature is thwarted when artificial regulations are made which limit the natural tendencies of man. Turn people loose and nature will do the rest for them, give them free play and nature will see to it that things will turn out well; for if nature is able to produce man by the play of her forces she is able to take care of him after he is produced if man will but allow her to run her course. If each man in society exerted his full natural rights, if all restrictions were thrown off, then a Harmony beneficial to all would be inevitable; for nature will select

those best able to cope with her, and all would then be the product of natural and not of artificial conditions such as we find in the state as now organized.

Justice, the chief concept in Plato's *Republic*, means for Spencer adjustment, equilibrium, and balancing between the individual and others. In sub-human justice there is an inevitable coincidence of benefits and merits—aggressions are immediately punished as in revenge. Each animal is subject to its own nature and to the results of its own conduct. There is added in human conduct the principle that we ought to refrain from so interfering with the conduct of others that the balance between nature and consequences is disturbed, that is to say, nature should take her course and the state should not interfere educationally or otherwise. Plato found justice to consist in order between classes, but to this Spencer adds harmony between nature and the individual and society.

It is evident that mechanical forces are greatly stressed by Spencer. While he does introduce such terms as "benevolence" and "sympathy," it is clear that, since these are the result of mechanical forces, mechanism or the blind forces of nature play an altogether too significant rôle in the political life of the race. Thinkers who succeeded Spencer, were quick to discern the errors involved in his too mechanical conception, and set about to give a more adequate interpretation of the spirit of the evolutionary doctrine. Others, on the contrary, carried the Darwinian theory of struggle to extremes, to limits not contemplated by the spirit of the theory, in the development of a doctrine which has been extremely important in our day, namely, the doctrine that right is the will of the strongest. In such a development the very spirit of the evolutionary theory is killed; democracy, the equal opportunity of one with all, the

true spirit of the evolutionary doctrine, is regarded as the theory of weaklings; Christianity, the religion of the contrite heart, the spirit of Utilitarianism as Mill put it, the religion of the democrat, is the religion of slaves.<sup>3</sup> But it is not our purpose to trace the evolutionary doctrine as it was worked out in such extreme forms due to an erroneous conception of it, but to confine ourselves to the political thinkers who attempted to interpret the theory in its true spirit—to those, that is, who make consciousness or intelligence a factor in evolution.

Thomas Huxley combats the false optimism that is involved in a theory that teaches that nature will take care of her own, that blind forces will produce if unmolested an ideal society in which harmony and justice will rule supreme. More in the true spirit, he believed that consciousness is *for* something. It is a tool for the fighting of the very forces which Spencer thought would produce the ideal. Nature is in part evil; we all possess some of the tiger and the ape; strife, evil, are cold hard facts; and the business of man is not to sit idly by and wait for nature to do what he may do more quickly. We must fight the very world order itself—the evil and strife in it and must not rest content with the doctrine that asserts that “God’s in his heaven, all’s well with the world,” or that “nature provides a way.” Such a doctrine is for the lazy man for nature has provided us with means for helping her, for directing her forces, for aiding the evolutionary process by substituting for *natural* selection an artificial type based upon intelligent foresight. In short, *intelligence is itself creative*. Intelligence must see that equal opportunities are open to all. It is irony, thinks Huxley, to say there is a free field for all unless the handi-

<sup>3</sup> See Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, *Beyond Good and Evil*. His chief works appeared between 1873 and 1889.



caps of children are removed; and one of the functions of the state is to repress all anti-social tendencies so that the beneficent desires and capacities of citizens may be furthered. The state then instead of being a detriment is necessary to freedom, for it represents intelligence as a force in evolution, as a factor in the struggle for existence and thence to freedom.<sup>4</sup>

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\*Darwinism provoked a great deal of discussion of a political nature. We have barely indicated some of the doctrines. David Ritchie, Thomas Hill Green, and Prince Kropotkin have done interesting work in this field. Kropotkin emphasizes *mutual aid* as a factor in evolution. From the beginning of life, he believes, co-operation and self-sacrifice have occurred on the part of the individual for the group. As we have indicated in an early chapter these factors have tended towards socializing man.

Darwinism has been the basis of much discussion in religion. It was in this field that the doctrine met its first serious opposition. But since both religion and the evolutionary hypothesis have become better understood the opposition in this direction has largely subsided.

The evolutionary theory has also been worked out in education, and to-day our educational theories are founded on the evolutionary basis.

Even the most authoritative of the sciences have yielded to the evolutionary hypothesis. Once the axioms of mathematics and the so-called laws of thought reigned as the most elemental and unchangeable concepts; but at this time the most advanced work in mathematics is being accomplished in a revision of the axioms, and no first-rate mathematician claims objective validity for them. The laws of thought are regarded now as functional concepts, as methods of handling things in a process of growth.

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## CHAPTER XVII

### EVOLUTION AND THE DISCIPLINES OF PHILOSOPHY

**1. Introduction.**—We have now to consider the influence of the evolutionary hypothesis on the various disciplines which go to make up philosophy proper, namely, ethics or conduct, æsthetics or beauty, epistemology or knowledge, and reality. Psychology, sociology, and politics, while once included in philosophy proper, have broken from the parental ties and have set up housekeeping for themselves; but the continuity and interdependence of experience is such that a question in any of the fields of interest involves a theory in every other field. It may require a longer time for the effects of speculation and research to be felt in some fields than in others, but in due season all interests reflect the changed note discerned in a more susceptible field. For example, the evolutionary doctrine was felt very early in religion, but it was a long time before the spirit of the doctrine was carried over into logical theory. In fact it is doubtful whether or not it has been carried over at all by a great many contemporary philosophers. Habits of thought continue as do others long after we do lip service to newer methods and conditions. Men had become too accustomed to speak in terms of fixity and finality, of absolute and eternal—following the absolute idealism of the German philosophers—to adjust to a philosophy of change, of experiment, of hazard, of something to be done by the common man. When empiricism came to full fruitage in the evolu-



tionary and instrumental philosophy, even though it has a history reaching from the latter part of the middle ages, and indeed, even from the Greeks, it found a large part of the intellectual world still holding to some form of the doctrine of authority: some to "axioms" based on "intuition," some to "divine right" to rule or absolutism in government, some to fixed and immutable "laws" of nature, some to fixed "laws" of thought, some to an "unchangeable" in religion. These favorite phantoms of unchangeability and authority still haunt the intellectual life of many of our people. We have just witnessed the physical overthrow of one form of absolutism and finality, that in government, and the consequences of the downfall of finality in this field will doubtless be reflected and felt in other forms of intellectual and social life.

**2. Evolution and Conduct.**—Evolution has influenced ethics or that type of human conduct which is thought of as good or bad, right or wrong, especially in two directions: in the method of dealing with moral problems, and in bringing about a change in the meaning of good and bad, right and wrong. As to method of study the historical or genetic has taken the place of the older method of analyzing concepts and determining from the analysis what one should do. Good is something, according to the older idea, which is discovered by a vision. From the evolutionary standpoint the chief interest is to determine how such concepts as good and bad came to be, the conditions which gave them birth. The evolutionist believes that if he can determine conditions in the life of moral beings, which gave significance to such concepts, we can make use of knowledge so gained in the solution of our own moral and social problems.

Instead of a "moral sense" planted in man at the beginning which dictates action, the evolutionist seeks to find

the conditions which, when operative, result in the foundation of such an idea; instead of "conscience," "that little spark in the breast" which we are cautioned to keep alive, as a thing unique and unitary, the evolutionist attempts to account for the facts on the basis of conditions which the race had to face in the struggle which resulted in the achieving of values. It accounts for "intuitive" judgments on the basis of race habits which have been built up in the course of the ages before the reflective type of consciousness became effective in the removal of difficulties. Reflective consciousness, that is to say, that type of consciousness which is involved in judging and reasoning, is a later development; and long before it appeared the race acted on lower levels of mentality, such as the reflex or the instinctive. Thus "intuitive" judgments are frequently correct because the larger part of the years of the race lies back of them. The older method was analytic and deductive; the newer, historical and empirical. To know a thing, the new doctrine teaches, we must know how it came to be. "It" was not always and "it" may be something else tomorrow. *Origin* and *validity* can not be separated.

The best way to become acquainted with the method of the evolutionary philosopher is to take an example. Let us take such an idea as justice. The older method of getting at this notion is well illustrated in one of Plato's dialogues. Justice was considered as a gift from the gods. Man had been created in common with all creatures and to each species was given some means of getting on in the world. To the birds were given wings for flight, to certain animals, horns and feet, to others, a keen sense of smell, to others, swiftness of foot, and so on; but when the gods came to men, almost all the "gifts" had been given over, and it took serious thinking to find something left which could be given man

so that he could get on in the world. In a happy moment, after long and serious meditation, Zeus, the father of gods and men, hit upon the idea of giving man the sense of justice. Though man was weak in comparison with other animals, this, the most powerful of all weapons, would render him able to cope with all the vicissitudes of his surroundings. Thus justice is a gift of the gods.

But the evolutionary thinker wishes to give an interpretation based on natural conditions, believing that such an interpretation will magnify the conception and render it more valuable. In the first stage of its development it is neither moral nor social but purely reflex and instinctive. It is the immediate response that an individual makes when attacked or injured. This is the stage of revenge, a seeming paradoxical starting point for the sense of justice. The second stage corresponds to revenge deferred to some later time. In the first stage the reaction is immediate, a blow, a kick, or some form of act which restores equilibrium or balance between the parties; but in the second stage, due to the intervention of a higher form of consciousness, "getting even" is delayed, and it frequently takes the form of community retaliation or blood feud. This stage is what we may call the stage of *equivalence*—an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. Examples are to be found in the Old Testament, in the code of Hammurabi, and in the experiences of children and of peoples of low culture today.

In fact, about the interpretation of the word *equivalence* could be written a large part of the history of the growth of justice. To begin with, as we have seen, it means like for like, blow for blow, and tooth for tooth; but it came to be later that instead of like for like, an exact equivalence, substitution could be made, such as *wergeld* or a price paid in cases of homicide. Today if a man commits a crime



“against the peace and dignity of the state,” he may satisfy the demands of the state against him by the payment of a fine. The penal codes of our states are largely made up of a catalog of the offenses against the state and the amount of money that it takes to appease the outraged populace. Insurance companies have set values on eyes, legs, feet, hands, et cetera with the result that one may “cash in” almost any organ that may happen to be lost or injured in the course of life. Damages in civil cases well illustrate the idea of equivalence; but with the difference that in modern life a standard of measure, namely, money, is used.

But equally interesting is the growth of the idea of the persons and classes to whom justice is to be rendered. In early society a man had no justice outside of his own group, being an outlaw from the standpoint of all other groups. Within his own group he is treated somewhat as an individual but as between groups there prevailed the same notions that prevail today among nations—the nation as a whole is responsible for acts of its people, and guilty and innocent suffer alike. Justice, that is, in early society was a joint or group matter—all suffered or benefited by the acts of the individuals of the group, and the individual got his own measure only within his group since no other group owed him anything. Among the Germans at the time of Cæsar this was the case. “*Latrocina nullam habent infamiam quæ extra fines cujusque civitatis fiunt.*” But the Greeks considered themselves more or less morally obligated to the barbarians as did the Romans to *hostes* or foreigners. The Latin word *hostes*, which means *foreigner*, is also the word for *enemy*, *hostile*, et cetera. This indicates the point that those outside the group are considered as both enemies and foreigners—no justice is due such. From this standpoint the evolution of the idea of justice centers about its

extension—to whom does it apply? Progress along this line has consisted in widening the area of the group and extending to all members the same duties and benefits. Beginning with the clan or group of blood kin which grew into a federation, then into a state, we see a gradual widening of the size of the group to which privileges and obligations extend. We are witnessing in our own day the attempt to extend the idea of justice to all peoples and nations—international justice, world justice. In the early days of our own country one of the great problems was to secure a national consciousness, to get people in the Northwest Territory, for example, to think in terms of the people of Georgia, or *vice versa*. But today the United States *is*, for we have developed a sense of national solidarity. But it can not be said that there has as yet developed a sense of international justice. The old idea that treaties should be based on compromise and not on justice is firmly rooted in man's experience. But there are those high in political authority as well as many ethical thinkers who see the problem of international justice, and who are urging its acceptance as a working principle in world relationships.

In primitive society there is little differentiation of labor, little that gives origin to "classes"; but as society becomes complex and more interdependent, classes grow up based on the work each does in the group or state—some are laborers or producers, some are fighters, and some are rulers. These are the three classes that Plato discusses in the *Republic*. Plato thought that justice would prevail if each class remained in its place and performed what it by nature was fitted to do. Justice, that is, consisted in Order, a proper balance and harmony between the classes, which would result when each class did its own work. But in our complex life a man may be a member of several groups. We

are all members of the state, a political group, the type which we have just discussed; but we are more than members of political units, and this creates the great problem of justice between classes. We are lawyers and churchmen, we are capitalists and laborers, we are teachers and farmers, and we can be members of the thousand other classes in our social life. When we study ethics from the evolutionary standpoint we find that ideas such as "family" or "justice" are not such as can be disposed of with an explanation that they are gifts of the gods, but we learn that they are ideas still in the making, still to be interpreted and reinterpreted in every new situation that arises. What was "justice" in primitive group life or in medieval days might be considered rank injustice now. Justice is coming to be more and more a social matter; the idea of social or community responsibility for sickness, for low wages, for pensions for the old, et cetera, is gradually growing. What is justice to the laborer? What is a "fair share"? How much should capital receive from the earnings of a concern in which both capital and labor are involved? Such questions as these involve the question of justice between classes and they involve the employment of the term "justice" not as a fixed concept but as a shifting instrumental one for the solution of problems.

Justice is also treated by the evolutionary thinker from the standpoint of the means by which it is secured. Beginning with primitive retaliation and blood feuds, it evolves through *ordeals* in which the gods determine the winner or the "just" one, and finally to organized courts of law and equity for the determination of cases. Retaliation is an expensive method especially when whole groups are involved, and this is usually the case. Between members of the same group various means are devised for giving to the individual



what is due him. When justice was looked upon as a supernatural matter, ordeals, as by fire or by water or by battle, were the means employed. But with the growth of intelligence and naturalistic conceptions, human agencies were devised in the nature of courts for the settling of disputes between members of the group, and between members of different groups. But in our system of courts there survive many primitive customs. We have failed to formulate an adequate international tribunal for the settling of international disputes, but this is rapidly coming to be. Such a tribunal can only be effective when an international consciousness and conscience are sufficiently developed to support such an institution. Until these are developed, the method of primitive retaliation and blood revenge will be employed. Until some form of international organization is effected, founded not on "balance of power," but on public sentiment, wars such as we have just lived through will be the result of disputes.

The evolutionary method of studying such a concept as "justice" displays it in its setting among the events and activities of common life. The method shows us how it came to be and what it means in the case in question; but it does not and can never show us what *justice* is *as such*. It teaches us that justice (and we are using "justice" as an example) is a *growing, instrumental* concept; it is an ideal which, when apparently attained in any case, moves forward growing as it moves, and constantly leading us to better and nobler achievements. The philosopher of evolution fails to find an eternal and an abiding "justice" written in golden letters across the sky, but he finds it as an adjective which characterizes a type of human action; he finds it as a human affair, steeped in the dew of human passion and desire, red with the blood of men, earthly and

lowly of parentage, born of revenge but tempered with intelligence. He finds not *Justice Absolute*, because this is a survival of autocracy and finality; but he discovers justice relative, justice functional, justice empirical, instrumental, democratic.

Having spoken of the attitude of the evolutionary philosopher to a concrete case, namely, "justice," we wish to indicate the method of treating morality, *i. e.*, conduct which we judge as good or bad, right or wrong. He begins with the simplest forms of behavior of a psychological nature, such as instinctive, those race habits which have a history; and he shows how, on these forms of action, conduct of a higher order originates, conduct which is *moral*, *i. e.*, conduct which is valued as a good, which is *chosen*. Morality is considered as a natural growth, as "called out or stimulated by certain necessities of individual and social existence"; not as a donation, but to repeat, as an achievement. It is a house not eternal in the heavens as Plato taught, but one made with human hands.

Having found the first stages of morality in instinctive behavior the evolutionary philosopher traces its growth through a second stage in which conduct becomes more rational, more social, and more moral. Out of the instincts to fight, for food, et cetera, grows intelligence or more rational ways of satisfying them than are possible on the basis of blind responses. For the purpose of satisfying food desires man becomes agricultural, and takes to trade and commerce. At the same time he is rationalizing his conduct, assisting him the better to gain what he desires, he is creating new ends of action, he is changing the kind of objects he wants, and what is more, he is creating himself. The creation of objects of value is the complementary process of creating a self, the self being reflected in the very

objects he chooses. Man becomes more social as he advances. We have seen that the social life of the race is founded on the maternal instinct which becomes, in the natural course of events, extended to other objects than the child. The necessity for mutual support, for co-operation, brought men together and tended to render them more social. Finally, when the methods of action which have been established, methods which have proved valuable in meeting the problems of the race, are sought consciously and chosen we have moral action in the strictest sense of the term.

Right and good, from the evolutionary viewpoint, are not "absolute and eternal essences independent of human opinion or volition," but rather are factors in a moral life which is in constant need of revision and reformation; and as factors, they themselves are concepts which change with the circumstances of life. As the moral self is shifting, changing, renewing, enlarging, and as right and good are elements in the life of moral agents, they change with the changes in the moral self. Good and right are born in the process of moral deliberation, of moral choice, and at the same time and in the same process is born the moral self. We do not begin, that is, with a moral self full blown, with good and right as set, fixed and eternal; but more lowly as the little child, we create our moral selves in judgments which give origin to right and good. Since this process of creation is never complete, the elements in it, self, good, right, are not finished and final, but are renewed and revitalized at the solution of every new difficulty. It is this type of moral life, thinks the evolutionist, that is genuinely progressive, which points the way "to the kingdom of man," which shall also be an ideal social order—a "kingdom of God."



3. **Evolution and Æsthetics.**—The older view,<sup>1</sup> that which in political life is *authority* and *divine right*; in ethics, right and good as *fixed* and *immutable*; in knowledge, truth *eternal*; in science, *fixed species* and *inexorable law*; in religion, church *infallible*, considered beauty as having a residence in that Absolute World of Perfect Forms where it shone forth of its own light to make bright the substitutes of it that, through some miraculous dispensation of Providence, had fallen to earth below to gladden the hearts of “fallen” man.

But the evolutionary conception is that neither has beauty “fallen,” nor has man, but that both are gradually coming to be in a never ceasing process of creation. Beauty, like good, truth, and all such concepts, is of humble parentage, but that this is so is a silent witness of man’s greatness.

How did the æsthetic interest arise? The evolutionary thinker seeks the origin of any interest he investigates, and having found it, he shows the chief stages in its development. In this way he accounts for the phenomenon in question naturally and historically. In telling how it came to be he is also telling conditions which make for its success or failure, so that one who reads intelligently can assist in the inauguration of such conditions as will favor or deter such features as command his interest. There is a good deal of agreement as to the origin of the æsthetic feeling. It arises in a superabundance of life, in play, of which it ever remains a part.<sup>2</sup> It differs from the other forms of play in the materials employed and the direction which the impulse

<sup>1</sup> Many æsthetic theories had been advanced before the rise of the evolutionary doctrine. We can not mention them here, much less discuss them. See references at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> The student should acquaint himself with the various theories of play, especially those of Groos, Spencer, and Hall.

takes. Even though the æsthetic feeling originates in play, how does it happen to become *creative*, how does play as motion become creation play? Dancing, the evolutionist answers, is the first form of art; it includes the expending of motor energy and æsthetic creation; and is found among all peoples of all climes; is symbolical, meaning war, peace, hunting, harvest, birth, death, marriage; and is, as is evident, connected with the vital life activities of the people such as food-getting activities, and marriage. But dancing included two other rudimentary arts, namely, music and poetry. The rhythm of the dance leads to both.

The evolutionary scientist and philosopher must find a use for things, for whatever is must have had a value in the race struggles else they would not have survived. *Beauty* is disinterested, non utilitarian—thus the problem for the evolutionist. Why was the æsthetic feeling evolved? The intellectual activity is easily accounted for, for it is concerned with practical things, and the same is true of religion, morality, and social life. But *why* the æsthetic? Darwin accounts for it on the theory of sex selection—the preference on the part of the female for the most skilful, most beautiful, most graceful, most highly colored, and most beautiful singers among the males. Therefore beauty was at a premium for the ugly members of the species died because no females would mate with them. There are certain objections to this theory which render it untenable. It is better to say that art originally had utilitarian aspects. This can be shown, it seems, when we think of the complementary relation that exists between hearing and music, and that it is valuable to man and to the lower animals alike to be able to distinguish the sounds of objects for the purposes of action. The dance being a social matter and being also an activity which favored concerted movement which would

be valuable in attack, et cetera, it is evident that it would possess utilitarian value.

What of the development of the æsthetic feeling? There are two lines of interest involved here: first, the progressive development towards individualism; second, the development along the line of what is considered beautiful or what is the beautiful object. From the first standpoint we find in æsthetics what we find in morality and in all lines of interest, religious, political, and the rest that æsthetics is first a group affair. A conglomerate of religion, æsthetics, ethics, logic, politics, science, and all the rest, is embodied in the term *custom*, and as we have suggested, progress has always consisted in threading out these separate interests, the rendering definite of the indefinite, and the disintegration of the integrated. Æsthetics is one element of the mass and progress in this line has consisted in the gradual separating of the æsthetic interest from the rest and of the differentiation of interests in the æsthetic mass itself. Æsthetics was originally social; dancing, a collective manifestation, "regulated and safeguarded by tradition, later on by laws, as in the Greek republics, and later still subject to the influence of fancy and individual caprice"; poetry is common property, belonging to the clan or group as a whole—there were no copyrights in those days; music is social, a community matter, regulated by the state and an instrument of education.<sup>3</sup>

The first objects to be considered beautiful are human beings. The line of development from this standpoint consists in the gradual withdrawing from the human object and extending the idea to embrace everything. "Human beings

<sup>3</sup> We have not discussed the plastic arts but the same principles are involved here as in the arts dealing with motion. In the former, "the work is at once architecture, sculpture, and painting, forming an inseparable whole, as to dancing, poetry, and music."



began by thinking that beautiful which resembled themselves. The Australian woman admired the Australian man, and the Fuegian man the Fuegian woman. Primitive æsthetics have a strictly *specific* character, and their relations with the sexual instinct are evident.”<sup>4</sup>

The stage in advance of the human form as the beautiful object is reached when ornaments are added to the body—the first step in the direction which resulted in the idea of nature as beautiful.

This extension is analogous to that which has taken place in the moral and social life when maternal love became transferred to objects other than the child. Ornaments and all objects which came in contact with the body became the objects of the æsthetic feeling. All forms of art tended to become dehumanized or rather nature tended to become humanized in artistic productions. We see poetry at first as a conglomerate of epic, lyric, and dramatic, all directed towards man, “exclusively human.” Nature played but little part in the *Iliad* and other epics; but much centered about gods and superhuman characters. At a later time the common man came in for his share of æsthetic consideration. We may state the order of the appearance of other than human objects in art somewhat as follows: first, animals which in general were closely connected with man, and which were used for food or for companions; second, the vegetable world, due probably to the food interests attached thereto; and third, the inorganic world, to nature itself. Concerning nature itself interesting facts are in evidence, which show the tendency to make man and his interests supreme—facts which harmonize with the anthropomorphic interpretations of the world, which we have already considered. When nature is first treated in art it is *cultivated* nature, nature

<sup>4</sup> Ribot, *The Psychology of the Emotions*, p. 342.

close to man, nature molded to man's needs; but later, much later indeed, the wild, the stormy, the trackless, the violent, came to be considered beautiful. Such scenery as is found in Switzerland had no attractions for the Romans,<sup>5</sup> but it was something to be avoided, due possibly to the long race experience which associated the wild aspects of nature with evil spirits.

The evolutionist, as appears evident, shows how beautiful objects come to be. He is not interested in beauty as such, an eternal, fixed beauty, for to him there is no such thing; but he is interested in giving an account of the birth of beautiful objects, how man creates in this field, as he does in the sphere of morality, a world to which is applicable the adjective *beautiful*. Beautiful expresses one of the ways of reacting, one of the instruments of behavior in the world of experience. Beautiful and ugly are categories, predicates to be applied to subjects, which are born out of that undifferentiated mass which is all man's world, or which is, as James says of the world of the child, "a big, booming, buzzing confusion."

**4. Evolution and Knowledge.**<sup>6</sup>—Knowledge, logic, epistemology, were among the last of the interests to become affected by the evolutionary doctrine. For twenty years after the publication of the *Origin of Species* nothing was done in logic from the evolutionary standpoint; and even after a paper appeared which indicated somewhat the new directions and bearings which logic should take, little if any notice was taken of it until near the close of the nine-

<sup>5</sup>"Caesar, when crossing the Alps, composed a treatise on grammar to beguile the tedium of the journey." Ribot, op. cit., 346.

<sup>6</sup>The intimate relation between knowledge and reality, epistemology and ontology, makes it impossible to speak of one apart from the other. Instead of a section devoted to each we shall speak of both under the heading above.

teenth century when William James and others called attention to it in ways which brought it to the notice of the intellectual public.

To understand the change in the knowledge problem brought about by the evolutionary hypothesis, one must have some idea of the general trend of doctrine before the time of James and Dewey. There were two current theories of knowledge, the empirical and the idealistic, both of which we have briefly touched upon. The latter, however, is the doctrine which was held by the great majority of philosophers. After we have cleared the ground by indicating what the problems of logic or knowledge are, we shall return to these two types of theory for the purpose of showing just what changes were brought about by the new movement.

Locke, in the famous *Essay on the Human Understanding*, set the problem of knowledge as that of determining the origin, the extent, and the validity of knowledge. We may state the problem somewhat as follows: what is knowledge, and what is the relation between knowledge and its object, or the relation between knowledge and reality? It was in the discussion of the relation between knowledge and reality that Locke met his most serious difficulties, because of the peculiar conception he had of what reality means; and it is for the reason that knowledge involves reality that we are throwing the knowledge-reality problem together. How is knowledge attained? The question implies that there is a method by which knowledge is made possible. That method we call the judgment which involves subject, predicate, and copula, all of which are ideas. In discussing the knowledge-reality problem we shall pursue the following order: What is the agent of knowledge or what are the means for bringing it about? An answer to this question will involve a discussion of the judgment which consists of subject, predicate,



and copula. What is the relation between knowledge and reality? This question involves a theory of the nature of ideas and of things. When is knowledge said to be true? An answer to this involves a theory as to the nature of truth.

We have already indicated in our discussions on the influence of the evolutionary doctrine on psychology some of the facts of the origin and development of knowledge. To them we wish to add that knowledge, as is true of morality and beauty, has a history. It takes its origin in primitive needs and grows out of the instinct of curiosity which in turn runs back to vital processes as we have suggested in the "Psychological Background." [The categories of thought, the parts of speech of logic, so to speak, have evolved out of difficulties to be met, and are present with us now as means which we have achieved for the purpose of meeting problems which we can not solve reflexly, instinctively, or on other levels of behavior. Since knowing grew out of needs, it always, though seemingly this may not be the case, keeps in close contact with the practical affairs of life. Knowing, biologically considered, is a means of making adjustments, of ironing out the difficulties into which the organism and its environment have fallen. Knowing, then, *happens* in a process which is more complex—in the process of living; it comes to be now and then and is not something that goes on all the time. Thinking is always a task and will be avoided when possible, for thinking is rather recent in the history of the race. The newly formed or recently acquired methods of action are not so well stamped in the organism and it usually takes the lines of least resistance in the actions it performs.

Leaving the historical side of the matter for the present we shall turn to the theories we mentioned above, namely,

empiricism and idealism. The logic of empiricism as well as that of idealism teaches that knowledge comes about in the judgment—that it is the agent or vehicle of knowledge, but these logics differ as to what is involved in the judgment. Empiricism teaches that there is a real world of fixed things on the outside and that ideas of these outside things are stamped on the mind which is at the beginning of life a blank. In other words, empiricism is a dualistic theory, taking two ultimates, mind and matter. Historically it goes immediately to Descartes who emphasized the radical difference between the two ultimates; but indirectly the dualistic conception is as old as philosophy itself, and is but a reflection of the older dualism of this and the other world, of the visible and the invisible, and of the psyche and the world soul. As we have said, dualism is a reflection of the idea of authority which has so possessed the mind of man.

But what are the logical difficulties in such a conception? If we say that knowledge is involved in the judgment, and that the judgment is made up of ideas—one idea the subject, the other the predicate—then we have said that knowledge is dealing with ideas only and not with things on the outside. We are never dealing with things in thinking but only with ideas of things. We always like to feel that we are doing business at first hand and not through the mediation of ideas; but empiricism, since it teaches that we think with ideas which are copies of things, can not logically permit us to have direct access to things in knowledge. This is one of the chief difficulties Locke has to meet. He said that all our knowledge consists in the agreement of ideas; but he soon found out that things which are outside, and which actually should figure in knowledge were left out. To remedy this defect he said later that in addition to agree-

ment between ideas knowledge consists also in the agreement of an idea with a thing. But how an idea which is mental (according to empiricism) could agree with something that is wholly different, namely, a thing, Locke could not answer. Things are in space and time, but ideas are not—according to the theory—and how such utterly different things could agree is a problem. Then, if they actually could or did agree, how are we to know it? What is the test which can be applied for agreement and disagreement of an idea with a thing? They can not agree in size, in shape, in color, and, in fact, in any of the ways we have in mind when we say that one thing agrees with another.

Empiricism teaches that truth is precisely the agreement of either ideas with themselves or of ideas with things; but if what we have said is true, empiricism is unable to give an adequate account of truth. In the first case we are dealing with copies and not with things directly; and in the second, we can never tell what “agreement” means and when it has taken place if it ever does take place.

In summary, let us point out precisely the difficulties of empiricism as a theory of knowledge. First, it begins with two *fixed, unchangeable* ultimates—mind and matter. Second, it asserts that knowledge is the agreement of ideas with each other, in which case we are not dealing with nature or things at all, and consequently, have left out one of our ultimates. Third, it then asserts (for it is essential that knowledge should somehow or other be connected with things) that knowledge consists in the agreement between an idea and a thing; and in this case we can never tell when the agreement takes place; and furthermore, it is impossible for ideas and things to disagree, for, according to the theory, ideas are *copies* of things. This means that empiricism *can not account for the fact of error*. Every theory



of knowledge must make a place for error, for, as is evident, error seems to be as industrious as truth.

Consequently, if knowledge actually does take place, if there is such an activity, thing, or relation as knowledge, empiricism fails to give an account of it which is free from contradictions. The moral is, as the stories in our school readers say, don't begin with *fixed* things, for they beguileth one into inconsistencies.

Idealism was the more important doctrine from the number of followers, and from the standpoint of intricacies and subtleties. Empiricism is the "plain" man's theory, while idealism is the theory of the schooled philosopher. Idealism has always been an ally of religion, and its history is long and interesting. Beginning in one of its forms with Plato, modified in Berkeley to the subjectivistic type, coming again in Kant and later German thinkers as objective idealism, and still later in romanticism—a history which we have briefly sketched—it is present with us to this day as one of the competitors in the philosophical arena. And in stating the knowledge-reality solution that it offers we shall be doing violence to many technical variations, for our statements are more or less general and are not the views of any particular idealist.

The fundamental principle in all types of idealism is that consciousness, mind, soul, in some form or other, is the chief thing in the universe. That is, *one* thing, consciousness, is primary, and not two, consciousness and things, as empiricism teaches. This consciousness may be that of the individual as Berkeley held, or it may be that of an Absolute, as recent idealists following Hegel, the German philosopher, teach. In our treatment we shall be concerned with knowledge in the system of absolute idealists—those who think of the universe as the expression of an absolute mind.

With this general postulate or principle of idealism before us we shall state the doctrine of the judgment, of the relation between knowledge and reality, and of truth. The idealist believes with the empiricist, that knowledge, humanly considered, is involved in the judgment, or that the judgment is the vehicle of knowledge, the judgment being, from this standpoint, the application to reality of an idea. We must keep in mind that the chief thing in the universe is consciousness, that is, absolute mind, and that it is *the real*, other things being merely appearance. *Real* reality is this great system which is the manifestation of the absolute mind, or which, indeed, is the absolute mind. It is not the simple things we see and hear and taste, but it is a comprehensive system shot through with absolute intelligence.

We must understand where the idea comes from that we apply to reality—this *real* reality, and not the things of sense. The idealist tells us that we get the idea which we use as the predicate of the judgment from a great number of individual experiences—that the idea of flag, for example, is gained and built up after a great many experiences with things of various kinds which we later call “flag.” The idea is a sort of composite photograph gained by the experience of a great many particulars. These particular things are the things we see and hear, such as a chair, a hat, a song, et cetera—that is we later call them chairs, hats, and songs. The judgment, in the light of what has been said, may be described as a process by which we attribute to a system of reality which is the manifestation of a universal mind a predicate which we as individuals have gained in our experiences with a world of particular things. Let us examine this a little more closely. We have the following elements to deal with: reality, that great system;

ideas which we have gained in our experience with the world which is not *the* real world, so that our ideas would not be ideas of the real, but of the world of appearance only. Then when we make a judgment we are applying to this great system of reality an idea which is one based on experience with appearance only in the hope that we may in some mysterious way arrive at knowledge. The judgment, therefore, from the standpoint of the assumptions of the idealist, is incapable of yielding knowledge.

The problem of the relation between knowledge and reality, if we speak of knowledge from the human standpoint and not from that of the divine or absolute mind, is almost meaningless, for as we have seen the instrument of knowledge, the judgment, proves to be no instrument at all.

Ideally considered, truth is consistency; it is the harmonious relation that exists between the parts of reality which is assumed to be conscious stuff or conscious relations. Humanly speaking, that is, speaking from the standpoint of the human knower, judgments can never be true, for they are partial, deal with parts, particular ideas, and truth as such is a whole. Thus our judgments are never true, but always fall short of absolute truth. Whereas the empiricist had trouble in making a place for error, since it is hard to see how an idea could disagree with a thing when the idea is a copy of the thing, the idealist, on the other hand, finds it an equally difficult task to find a place for human truth. In finding a place for error in his system it seems that the idealist is not able to find a place for anything else.

Summarizing the knowledge-reality doctrine as treated by objective idealism, we may say that it assumes a fixed and unchangeable system of reality which is permeated and shot through with an intelligence of an absolute type. Human knowledge, which is never real or true knowledge, is brought



about by the judgment which, from the nature of the means of making judgments, results not in knowledge but a poor substitute. Judgments are never true for two reasons: first, the idea which is the predicate of the judgment is gained not from true reality, yet it is applied to reality; second, judgments can never exhaust reality, but can only approach it, so that no human judgment is ever true, and if it could be we should never know it.

The difficulties here are not unlike those found in empiricism. There is a dualism but it is of a different nature, namely, that of the eternal and absolute knower, on the one hand, and the human knower, on the other, or that of the universal system of reality and that of the common sense world. Both elements in the dualism are fixed and eternal, just as is the case with the mind-things dualism of empiricism.

It is evident, therefore, that a philosophy of evolution must begin with difficulties which are common to both the other systems in the hope of bringing to light a more adequate theory of the nature of knowledge. These difficulties are, first and chiefly, the fixed and unalterable elements in both types of theory, the *authoritative* view; and, second, the dualism that runs through both theories.

Let us follow the theory of knowledge and of reality as the evolutionist develops it. He in common with the others believes that knowledge comes about in the judgment, but he holds to no fixed thing called mind and to no equally fixed system of objects. Reality is neither a system done up once for all by an absolute mind nor is it a world to be copied or duplicated by a mind. The evolutionary philosopher believes the judgment to be the process which occurs when a reconstruction is to take place, when a difficulty is to be met, or a problem to be solved. When things have gone

wrong, then thinking takes place, and thinking results in a judgment which means a decision, a pronouncement which lays down a program for action. The subject of the judgment is that part of the world which is *not in question*, not, as idealism says, a system of reality, finished and complete, for if this were the case no judgments would be necessary and no thinking would occur. The subject is the *given*, the *granted*. The predicate is an idea, and in this there is agreement with both idealism and empiricism; but *idea* as the evolutionist uses the term is neither a copy of a thing as empiricism teaches, nor is it something built up out of a number of experiences with appearances as idealism teaches; it is a plan of action, a program, a *modus operandi*. The copula represents the experimental, the try-on process, the action of fitting the subject and the predicate. We conclude that the judgment, from the evolutionary standpoint, is a process of trying-on of one plan of action (the predicate) to something that is unquestioned (the subject) for the purpose of solving a problem or meeting a difficult situation which has come about in the life of the one making the judgment. There is nothing fixed, neither subject nor predicate, but the former is fixed or rather unquestioned for the moment and may itself be the questioned at some later time in the course of experience; while the latter always represents a *tentative conclusion*.

The evolutionary view of knowledge is that knowledge is *for* something; it is purposive, directive. This is the reason for calling it the *instrumental theory of knowledge*, or *instrumental logic*, as it is generally called today. *Knowing is an instrument*, a means of getting on in the world, an instrument in the creation of values. It is precisely this fact of the creative aspect of intelligence that the early revolutionary philosopher, Herbert Spencer for example,

did not consider. Had he thought of intelligence as creative in the judgment he would not have preached *laissez faire* in government and mechanism in ethics.

Knowledge as it is expressed in the judgment gives us a clue to the "instrumentalist's" (we shall use this term now for the evolutionary view) theory of reality. It is certainly something not fixed once for all, but reality for the instrumentalist is this whole creative process. It is not something which is the product of a process, for the product never comes to be in any fixed sense, but is ever entering into new and vital relations, and is always in solution. Process, change, creation, dynamics, movement, evolution—these are words which express the instrumentalist's idea of the nature of reality. Instead of a reality that is the same "yesterday, today and forever," the instrumentalist believes that reality is precisely this process of change, flux, and movement. Just as life is not something that stands over against the series of events which make it up, but *is* that series of events, so is reality not something permanent over against a process of change, but is that very process of change itself. The process is one of creation—the creation of valuable objects, of principles of conduct, and of a self.

What is the relation between knowledge and reality? Knowledge is the creation of objects—objects in the wide sense of the term as including principles, values, and institutions. It is neither something set over against an objective nature as a copy of the latter, nor is it the completed universe of an absolute mind, nor the meager details of this universe gained by the human mind; but it stands as creator to created—ever ready to recreate in some new experience that which has before been created.

Truth, says instrumentalism, is what works out, that which does what you expect it to do. The judgment is true



when you can "bank" on it and not be disappointed. If, when you predict, or when you follow the lead of your idea or plan, it brings you to the ends sought for in the beginning, your judgment is true. It does not consist in agreement of ideas, or the agreement of ideas with an outside reality; neither is it an eternal something which always is, but it is a name given to ways of thinking which get the thinker where he started. As a railroad ticket is a "true" one when it lands the passenger at the station he sought, so is an idea "true," not when it agrees with something outside, but when it gets the thinker successfully to the end of his intellectual journey.

Truth, reality, ideas and judgments are not *things* that stand out eternally "there," whether in the skies above or in the earth beneath; but they are names used to characterize certain vital stages in a process which is ever going on, the process of creation, of evolution. In that process we may speak of reality, this being valuable for our purposes; again, we may speak of truth; later, of ideas; and still again, of judgments; but because we talk about them we should not delude ourselves into thinking we can handle them as something eternally existing as we handle a specimen under the glass.

Such a conception of truth and reality, the instrumentalist believes, is in harmony with the general nature of progress. He fails to see how progress, genuine creation, can occur on any other theory—on theories of finality, fixity, and authority; but he believes that the idea of creation which we have sketched here gives man a vote in the affairs of the universe, renders him a citizen of the world to aid in the creation of valuable objects in the nature of institutions and principles, encourages him to attempt things "unattempted yet in prose or rhyme," inspires him to the crea-

tion of "more stately mansions," and to the forsaking of his "low vaulted past." He believes that the days of authority are over, whether in religion, in rulership, in science, or in philosophy; and he offers this dynamic universe as a challenge to the volition and intelligence of man, a universe to be won or lost at man's option, a universe not to fall down before and worship as the slave before his master, the subject before his king, the scientist before his principle, the philosopher before his system, but a universe to be controlled, directed, and recreated by man's intelligence.

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